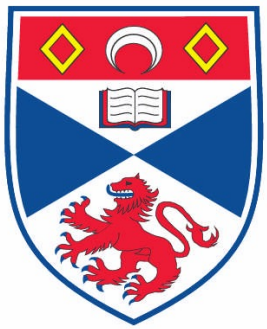
The Emergence of Post-Hybrid Identities: a Comparative Analysis of National Identity Formations in Germany's Contemporary Hip-Hop Culture

Marissa Kristina Munderloh



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Abstract

This thesis examines how hip-hop has become a meaningful cultural movement for contemporary artists in Hamburg and in Oldenburg. The comparative analysis is guided by a three-dimensional theoretical framework that considers the spatial, historical and social influences, which have shaped hip-hop music, dance, rap and graffiti art in the USA and subsequently in the two northern German cities. The research methods entail participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a close reading of hip-hop's cultural texts in the form of videos, photographs and lyrics. The first chapter analyses the manifestation of hip-hop music in Hamburg. The second chapter looks at the local adaptation of hip-hop's dance styles. The last two chapters on rap and graffiti art present a comparative analysis between the art forms' appropriation in Hamburg and in Oldenburg.

In comparing hip-hop's four main elements and their practices in two distinct cities, this research project expands current German hip-hop scholarship beyond the common focus on rap, especially in terms of rap being a voice of the minority. It also offers insights into the ways in which artists express their local, regional or national identity as a culturally hybrid state, since hip-hop's art forms have always been the result of cultural and artistic mixture. The theoretical focus on spatiality, historicality and sociality moreover reveals different and even contradicting manifestations of cultural hybridity and identity in hip-hop. In particular, this thesis looks at the formation of post-hybrid identities, with which hip-hop artists aim at expressing their multiculturality as an inherent part of their life in Germany.

Declarations

1. Candidate's declarations:

I, Marissa Kristina Munderloh, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in January 2011 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in German in January 2011; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2011 and 2014.

Date 5 March 2015 Signature of candidate

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List of Literature Abbreviations

THSP: Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places by Edward W Soja (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Pub., 1996)

LOC: The Location of Culture by Homi K Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1994)

STGM: Stigma: Notes on The Management of Spoiled Identity by Erving Goffman (New York: Simon Schuster, 1963)

PSEL: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life by Erving Goffman (New York: Anchor Books, 1959)

1 Introduction

> ‚Wir als Union treten für die deutsche Leitkultur und gegen Multikulti ein – Multikulti ist tot.'[1]
>
> ‚Mann, diese Politiker haben nicht gerafft, dass ich das Lied nicht als Ausländer, sondern als Deutscher geschrieben habe!'[2]

This research project began in 2010, coinciding with the time when CSU chairman Horst Seehofer and African-American German rapper Harris made the abovementioned statements. German Chancellor Angela Merkel further added to Seehofer's stance that 'der Ansatz für Multikulti ist gescheitert, absolut gescheitert.'[3] Yet this thesis offers a perspective on Germany's contemporary cultural state that echoes Harris' identity dilemma. By looking at contemporary German hip-hop culture, this study aims to show how this artistic movement in Germany already comprises multiculturalism. It therefore re-considers the romantic notion of 'Germany's predominant or guiding culture,'[4] which, according to Hartwig Pautz, has been 'forged on the belief that different, sequestered cultures should remain separate in order to retain their identities and avoid otherwise inevitable cultural conflicts.'[5]

To capture aspects of the multiculturality of contemporary Germany via hip-hop may seem a paradox at first. At the time of the eruption of the German *Leitkultur* debate in 2010, hip-hop in Germany was still being primarily represented through the commercial circulation of German gangsta rap, which was based on disseminating provocative messages that promoted physical aggression, misogyny and socio-cultural segregation, from a racial minority perspective as well as from an extreme German nationalist point of view.[6] Hence, commercially-speaking, it seemed as though German

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1 Seehofer, Horst in 'Integrationsdebatte: Von Der Leyen versus Seehofer: „Eintrittsschwellen Senken"', *Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland - Inland* (Reuters, 16 October 2010), Video <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/integrationsdebatte-von-der-leyen-versus-seehofer-eintrittsschwellen-senken-11056459.html> [accessed 27 February 2014].

2 Harris in Pham, Khuê, 'Deutscher Patriot: Der Rap-Musiker Harris ist dunkelhäutig – und stolz auf sein Land. In seinen Texten beschimpft er Integrationsverweigerer', *Die Zeit – Politik*, 47 (18 November 2010), p. 17. Harris refers to his song 'Nur ein Augenblick' (2010) which was used as the soundtrack by the German Federal Government during a political campaign for integration.

3 Merkel, Angela in 'Integration: Merkel erklärt Multikulti für Gescheitert', *SPIEGEL ONLINE* (Spiegel.de, 16 October 2010) <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/integration-merkel-erklaert-multikulti-fuer-gescheitert-a-723532.html> [accessed 25 February 2014].

4 Pautz, Hartwig, 'The Politics of Identity in Germany: the *Leitkultur* Debate', *Race & Class*, 46 (4), (2005), 39-52 (p. 40).

5 Ibid.

6 Cf. Hartmann, Andreas, 'Hip-Hop in Deutschland', *Musik* (Goethe Institut, September 2007) <http://www.goethe.de/kue/mus/pop/de2621937.htm> [accessed 15 January 2014]; cf. Peschke, Andre, 'Breite Aufmerksamkeit seit Aggro Berlin und Gangster Rap', in *Hip-Hop in*

hip-hop's image reflected Seehofer's and Merkel's political statements on Germany's culturally divided status. However, this research project has little to do with that particular subgenre of German rap, whose domination overshadowed the knowledge and richness of the overall movement that comprises hip-hop.

According to hip-hop founding father DJ Kool Herc, hip-hop culture's entirety is captured by 'the four hip-hop elements: DJing, B-Boying, MCing,[7] and Graffiti.'[8] This study draws upon DJ Kool Herc's outline of hip-hop's main art forms[9] and examines the ways in which each of them has become meaningful and authentic in a German cultural context. Indeed, German graffiti artist Tasek claims that 'wenn du deine eigene relevante Sprache daraus [aus Hip-Hop] entwickelst, dann gewinnst du langsam an Authentizität.[10] Aber das ist eben halt echt genau dieses Spannungsfeld, was im Hip-Hop auch, glaube ich, *echt* interessant ist.'[11] In order to trace hip-hop's development into becoming a relevant form of expression for artists in Germany, the national focus of this study has been narrowed down to the two local German hip-hop communities of Hamburg and Oldenburg.

Hamburg, with over 1.700.000 inhabitants, is considered a metropolitan area that is able to offer a '"big city" life, replete with the requisite opportunities and problems that come with living in an urban environment, giving what practitioners believe is to be an air of authenticity to the city's hip-hop practices.'[12] Moreover, Hamburg is home to 'the highest proportion of residents without an ethnic German background, at 27.5%.'[13]

Deutschland – Analyse einer Jugendkultur aus pädagogischer Perspektive (Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag, 2010), pp. 113-21.

7 MCing is a synonym for rapping, derived from the rapper's initial role of being the 'master of ceremony', which will be further explored in chapter 4.

8 Kool Herc in Chang, Jeff, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005), p. xi.

9 While the art of beat boxing is often also considered one of hip-hop's main elements, it was not pursued as a communal practice during the time of my fieldwork and does therefore not feature in this study.

10 The concept of 'authenticity' in this quotation and throughout this thesis will appear in reference to the production of hip-hop art. 'Realness' is also employed as a synonym for authenticity by the hip-hop community, and both terms describe the norm of creating art in line with the original practices, functions and aims of hip-hop: to be an honest reflection of one's personality and lifestyle, to aim at channelling creativity in a positive way and to be practised in an urban space. For more information on hip-hop's constructed authenticity, especially in a gangster rap context, see McLeoud, Kembrew, 'Authenticity within Hip-Hop and Other Cultures Threatened with Assimilation', in Neal, Mark Anthony and Forman, Murray, eds., *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader,* 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 165-78.

11 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.

12 Templeton, Inez H, *What's so German about It? Cultural Identity in the Berlin Hip Hop Scene* (Stirling: University of Stirling, 2006), p. 207.

13 Anonymous, 'Census Reveals German Population Lower than Thought', *BBC News Europe* (BBC.com, 31 May 2013) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22727898> [accessed 31 May 2013].

This multicultural composition is also reflected in its hip-hop community, which comprises many different ethnic heritages. Lastly, hip-hop in Hamburg is widely pursued as a profession, thus providing insights into the commercial realm of German hip-hop culture.

Oldenburg, on the other hand, with just under 170.000 residents,[14] provides an interesting contrast to Hamburg. Local graffiti artist Asek states that 'national gesehen ist Oldenburg, glaube ich, da echt so ein Provinzstädtchen!'[15] Within its small, cosy urban space, Oldenburg's hip-hop community engages in this art form as an underground movement and as a communal leisure activity motivated by forces beyond monetary gains. Furthermore, the local hip-hop community almost exclusively comprises ethnic Germans. Hence, the two cities capture two divergent social and cultural compositions of German hip-hop while being geographically connected through a shared northern German region.

By comparing hip-hop's manifestation in Hamburg and in Oldenburg as a relevant German cultural practice, this study not only presents the first integrative study that evaluates German hip-hop culture in its full and complex artistic foundation, namely as a 'mehrdimensionale kulturelle Praxis, deren Bestandteile mit mehreren semiotischen Codes operieren: Bild, Sound, Typografie, Körperbewegung, Sprache,'[16] it aims at deconstructing the common (mis)understanding of German hip-hop as merely consisting of gangsta rap. As German hip-hop scholar Ayla Güler Saied observes: 'Schaut man sich die öffentlich medial bekannten Künstler an, so scheint das Zusammenspiel zwischen Ghetto-Bezug aus der Unterschicht und Rap-Karriere unumgänglich. Dazu gehört auch eine Knastkarriere, um die Credibility und Authentizität zu unterstreichen.'[17] Rather, in contrast to the socially-harmful lyrical messages and images promoted by gangsta rap, this study will show how hip-hop artists also attempt to contribute to social and cultural integration through their art forms.

In order to understand how hip-hop can achieve these socio-cultural aims, the thesis briefly outlines the circumstances in which hip-hop emerged as an artistic movement in New York City. It then looks at the ways in which hip-hop's art forms were introduced in West Germany and imitated by German practitioners before being eventually

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14 Stadt Oldenburg, 'Statistik', *Entwicklung der Einwohnerzahl 1978-2012* (Fachdienst Stadtinformation und Geodaten, 2012) <http://www.oldenburg.de/fileadmin/oldenburg/Benutzer/PDF/40/402/0202-2012-Z-Internetx.pdf> [accessed 20 March 2012].

15 Asek, interviewed by author, 21 March 2012.

16 Androutsopoulos, Jannis, 'Einleitung', in Androutsopoulos, Jannis, ed., *HipHop – Globale Kultur, Soziale Praktiken* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2003), pp. 9-23 (p. 15).

17 Güler Saied, Ayla, *Rap in Deutschland – Musik als Interaktionsmedium zwischen Partykultur und urbanen Anerkennungskämpfen* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2012), p. 160.

adapted as a self-stereotypical German movement. This thesis will also show how artists incorporated other cultural influences into hip-hop's art forms, which has resulted in a mixture or hybridisation of German hip-hop. This hybridisation has, at some points, even revealed itself as an expression of Germanness that consists of multiculturality. It is these expressions of identity that this thesis highlights, naming them formations of post-hybrid identities. In order to highlight these developments as a relevant factor towards understanding the cultural complexity and the multicultural struggle within contemporary Germany, the following section will provide a brief overview of the on-going debates concerning the German *Leitkultur,* the supposed problems of multiculturalism in Germany, as well as the challenges of the cultural hybrid, or even the post-hybrid, in a German national context.

1.1 A Multicultural Germany?

The previously mentioned political notion of Germany as a separated cultural landscape and one in which new cultural lifestyles (brought by immigrants) should conform to values and norms of a supposed German leading culture is not a recent development. In 1998, Brandenburg's interior minister, Jörg Schönbohm, introduced the term *Leitkultur* into Germany's national political debate about its immigration issues.[18] Two years later, the concept became more prominent when it was appropriated by Friedrich Merz, the parliamentary party leader of the CDU. He stated:

> Das Aufnahmeland muss tolerant und offen sein. Zuwanderer, die auf Zeit oder auf Dauer bei uns leben wollen, müssen ihrerseits bereit sein, die Regeln des Zusammenlebens in Deutschland zu respektieren. Ich habe diese Regeln als die 'freiheitliche deutsche Leitkultur' bezeichnet. Die Formulierung hat reflexartig Empörung ebenso ausgelöst wie breite Zustimmung.[19]

While the last sentence highlights the divided opinions towards needing, having and respecting a supposedly dominant German culture, Merz also admits that in Germany and for Germans there does not actually exist a definition of 'was wir unter unserer Kultur verstehen.'[20] It is seemingly only understood as a counter model to a multicultural German society.

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[18] Turpin, Tilman, 'Die Leitkultur-Debatte: Fragen nach Identität und Integration in Deutschland', in Bedorf, Thomas, Felix Heidenreich, and Marcus Obrecht, eds., *Die Zukunft der Demokratie: L'avenir de la démocratie* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009) p. 105.

[19] Merz, Friedrich, 'Einwanderung und Identität', *Die Welt* (Die Welt, 25 October 2000) <http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article540438/Einwanderung-und-Identitaet.html> [accessed 10 January 2015].

[20] Ibid.

This understanding has been shared by CDU colleagues Merkel and Seehofer, as stated in the beginning of this thesis, and has gained further public prominence through the opinions of banker and SPD member Thilo Sarrazin. The former Berlin senator of finance published the book *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* in 2010, which elaborated on his previous provocative comments regarding Germany's cultural and social state. In 2009, for instance, Sarrazin claimed that 'die Türken erobern Deutschland genauso, wie die Kosovaren das Kosovo erobert haben: durch eine höhere Geburtenrate. [...] Ich muss niemanden anerkennen, der [...] ständig neue kleine Kopftuchmädchen produziert.'[21] According to Güler Saied, such statements clearly and dangerously parallel racist and nationalistic discourses: 'Was diese Diskurse vereint, ist die Fokussierung auf die völkische Nation und der demografische Wandel, demnach die „Deutschen" auszusterben drohen.'[22] Such nationalistic interpretations of the German migration debate will be touched upon in more detail later in this section.

In connection with this demographic change due to Turkish (and Muslim) immigrants, politicians and researchers have also warned about the development of a 'parallel society' (*Parallelgesellschaft*) in Germany. The term was coined by German sociologist Wilhelm Heitmeyer, who in an interview with *Die Zeit* in 1996 stated that immigrants in Germany were living in their own exclusive and isolated society and hence parallel to the German one.[23] While migration scholar Andrea Schmelz criticises Heitmeyer's statement for its lack of empirical proof, she explains that the term has nevertheless manifested itself in public debate, conjuring an 'image of an ethnically homogenous population group which separates itself spatially, socially and culturally from the mainstream society. At the same time, the term implies massive criticism of the immigrants' way of life and signals a demand for cultural assimilation.'[24]

Yet with no exact definition of German leading culture to which immigrants can assimilate, the actual problem, according to migration researcher Klaus J Bade, is 'dass wir in Deutschland inzwischen eine multikulturelle Gesellschaft haben, ob wir das so wollten oder nicht – Punkt. Die Frage ist, wie man damit umgeht.'[25] In an interview with

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[21] Sarrazin, Thilo, in 'Sarrazin droht Ausschluss aus der SPD', *taz.de* (Die Tageszeitung, 5 October 2009) <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/digitaz/artikel/?ressort=ba&dig=2009/10/05/a0116&cHash=500e526491> [accessed 10 January 2015].

[22] Güler Saied, p. 142.

[23] Schmelz, Andrea, 'Immigration and Integration Policies and Practices in Germany', in Segal, Uma A, Doreen Elliot, and Nazneen S Mayadas, eds., *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices, and Trends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 63-78 (p. 75).

[24] Ibid.

[25] Bade, Klaus J, '„Leitkultur"-Debatte: „Zuwanderung wird als Bedrohung empfunden"', in *SPIEGEL ONLINE* (Spiegel.de, 24 November 2004) <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/leitkultur-debatte-zuwanderung-wird-als-bedrohung-empfunden-a-329285.html> [accessed 10 January 2015].

Spiegel Online, Bade reverses the issue of the *Parallelgesellschaft* and the *Leitkultur* debate by explaining that 'es [kann] nicht um eine leitende Kultur als solche gehen, sondern eben um den Umgang mit kulturellen Unterschieden.'[26] Bade thus concludes: 'Die Parallelgesellschaften gibt es in den Köpfen derer, die Angst davor haben: Ich habe Angst, und glaube, dass der andere daran Schuld ist.'[27]

The issue regarding migration in Germany's socio-political landscape is therefore the development of a cultural anxiety, since '[i]n Deutschland ist der Begriff negativ: Migration als Bedrohung.'[28] This notion can be linked to Heitmeyer's public influence, who, together with Reimund Anhut, published a book on Germany's supposedly disintegrating socio-cultural state called *Bedrohte Gesellschaft. Soziale Desintegrationprozesse in ethnisch-kulturellen Konfliktkonstellationen*. Similar to Sarrazin's publication – indeed, both books appeared in 2010 – Güler Saied claims that merely reading the title already suggests 'einen automatischen Zusammenhang von ethnischer Zugehörigkeit, Desintegration und Konfliktpotenzial und reiht sich somit in den hegemonialen Diskurs ein, der ethnische Zugehörigkeit mit negativen Konnotationen belegt'.[29]

This negative connotation of ethnic difference has most recently been strengthened with the PEGIDA movement in Germany. The acronym stands for *Patriotische Europäer Gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* and was founded in Dresden in late 2014. As the BBC reports, the PEGIDA supporters who partake in weekly demonstrations 'want Germany to curb immigration, accusing the authorities of failing to enforce existing laws. It challenges what it sees as liberal political correctness and multiculturalism in Germany'.[30] While the demonstrations have attracted extreme right-wing groups, such as neo-Nazis and hooligans, its supporters also comprise middle-class citizens, including Sarrazin who claims that '[e]in wachsender Teil der muslimischen Mitbürger in Europa teilt die westliche Werteordnung nicht, will sich kulturell nicht integrieren und schottet sich in Parallelgesellschaften ab.'[31] Sarrazin's criticism thus highlights an anxiety towards a culturally divided and hence unstable status of Germany where religion is, again, used as an all-encompassing category that equals migration-related foreignness.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Güler Saied, p. 129.
[30] Anonymous, 'Who goes to German Pegida "anti-Islamisation" rallies?', *BBC News Europe* (BBC.com, 13 January 2015) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30776182> [accessed 13 January 2015].
[31] Sarrazin, Thilo in 'Merkels Aussage vernebelt das Problem', *Die Welt* (Die Welt, 20 January 2015) <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article136566652/Merkels-Aussage-zum-Islam-vernebelt-das-Problem.html> [accessed 21 January 2015].

Indeed, the re-use of Islam as an umbrella term for any form of 'otherness' is not uncommon. Ethnologist Gerd Baumann explains that 'because religion sounds so absolute, it can be used as a translation for other, more relative, forms of conflict. In complex situations of social strife, one can often find ethnic, national, or migratory boundaries transformed into religious ones.'[32] Yet, just as the *Leitkultur* debate has divided opinions, thousands of Germans including high-profile celebrities and politicians have condemned the PEGIDA movement and have participated in counter-demonstrations to prove their support for Germany's multiculturalism.

The question that nevertheless remains is: why does an anxiety towards multiculturalism exist? According to sociologist and migration scholar Nira Yuval-Davis, in a national context 'there are two kinds of social and cultural differences: those which threaten and those which do not. Multiculturalism is aimed at nourishing and perpetuating the kind of differences which do not.'[33] Yuval-Davis further elaborates that

> there is a continuous debate about the limits of multiculturalism between those who want a continued construction of the national collectivity as homogenous and assimilatory, and those who have been calling for the institutionalisation of ethnic pluralism and the preservation of the ethnic minorities' cultures of origin as legitimate parts of the national project.[34]

The anxiety is therefore firstly spurred by the construct of the nation itself, where members of 'one or several ethnic groups [...] think, or are thought in some way, to "own" a state, that is, to carry a special responsibility for it.'[35] Yet, in this national context, Baumann notes that modern nation-states have also actively 'included some ethnic groups and excluded others, or privileged some and marginalized others. It is precisely this exclusion that turns numbers of people into "minorities" and thereby creates the key problem between nation-state and the multicultural project.'[36]

In Germany, the exclusion of ethnic groups has been most notably achieved through West Germany's guest worker treaties of the 1960s and 70s.[37] The term 'guest' in guest

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[32] Baumann, Gerd, *The Multicultural Riddle – Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), p. 23.

[33] Yuval-Davis, Nira, 'Ethnicity, Gender Relations and Multiculturalism', in *Debating Cultural Hybridity*, pp. 193-208 (p. 197).

[34] Ibid.

[35] Baumann, p. 30.

[36] Ibid., pp. 31/2.

[37] For more information on the different nations and treaties concerning guest workers in West Germany see Butterwege, Carolin, 'Von der „Gastarbeiter"-Anwerbung zum Zuwanderungsgesetz Migrationsgeschehen und Zuwanderungspolitik in der Bundesrepublik', *Grundlagendossier Migration* (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 15 March 2005) <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/56377/migrationspolitik-in-der-brd?p=all> [accessed 20 January 2015].

worker not only reveals the idea of the invited worker returning home. It also implies that the workers who choose to settle in Germany remain being guests – guests who are, however, not welcome anymore. By continuing to refer to these new German citizens as such, the problem in contemporary Germany, according to Güler Saied, is that:

> Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland hat sich im internationalen Vergleich erst relativ spät dazu bekannt, ein Einwanderungsland zu sein. Obwohl Migrationsbewegungen historisch gesehen seit jeher vorhanden gewesen sind und maßgeblich zum Wachstum und Entstehen von Großstädten beigetragen haben, wird Migration in vielerlei Hinsicht problematisiert, skandalisiert und durch Migrationsregime versucht zu regulieren.[38]

Within this problematisation of migration, Güler Saied adds that 'ethnische Kategorien sind hierbei ein Instrument, um Unterschiede immer wieder neu zu konstruieren und den Diskurs damit immer wieder zu aktivieren.'[39] Ethnicity is therefore not only used as a political tool to locate a problem but is also treated as a self-contained category with no room for re-adjustment, despite Baumann explaining that 'ethnicity is not an identity given by nature, but an identification created through social action.'[40] In this social and hence subjective context, ethnic identities are something fluid and negotiable and can therefore 'be stressed or unstressed, enjoyed or resented, imposed or even denied, all depending on situation and context.'[41] Often, however, Baumann states that the common perception or the 'idea of ethnicity appeals, first and foremost, to blood from the past. It invokes biological ancestry and then claims that present-day identities follow from this ancestry.'[42]

This idea is especially relevant in the German national context, for its citizenship law of *ius sanguini* has been the defining factor for becoming a German citizen from 1871 onwards. It has only been changed once, adding a rule in 2000, which allows German citizenship when born on German territory.[43] However, due to the long standing tradition of citizenship through bloodline, German journalist Frida Thum reports in her article 'Und woher kommst du wirklich?' published in *Die Zeit* in 2014 that 'die alte tief verwurzelte Vorstellung, dass nur deutsch ist, wer auch deutsche Vorfahren hat, [ist] in

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38 Güler Saied, p. 122.
39 Ibid., p. 124.
40 Baumann, p. 21.
41 Ibid., p. 64.
42 Ibid., pp. 19/20.
43 For detailed information on the conditions regarding German citizenship via place of birth, see Beauftragte für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, 'Staatsangehörigkeit: Das Geburtstortprinzig', *Die Bundesregierung* (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2015) <http://bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Bundesregierung/BeauftragtefuerIntegration/Staatsangehoerigkeit/geburtsortprinzpip/_node.html> [accessed 20 January 2015].

Schulen, am Arbeitsplatz und auch sonst im Alltag präsent.'[44] Güler Saied specifically blames the on-going political categorisation for this exclusive ethnic understanding of Germanness, adding that '[d]ie Kategorie „Personen mit Migrationshintergrund" wurde vom Statistischen Bundesamt in den Mikrozensus 2005 eingeführt und ist so gesehen die rechtlich verankerte Form der Stigmatisierung. [...] hierbei [gilt] selbst die dritte Generation noch als Person mit Migrationshintergrund.'[45]

In an everyday context, the simplest and often most common categorisation of having a *'Migrationshintergrund*' is influenced by having visible traces of 'otherness,' such as the headscarf mentioned by Sarrazin as a threatening difference to Germany's culture.[46] Aside from different dress codes, visible 'otherness' can also be interpreted in skin colour, especially when contrasted to 'whiteness,' for as Alastair Bonnet observes, in western Europe '[n]on-white identities, by contrast [to white identities], have been denied the privileges of normativity, and are marked within the West as marginal and inferior.'[47] Relating this situation to Germany, Güler Saied similarly claims: 'Während heute beispielsweise Weiße [sic] französische, schwedische oder nordamerikanische MigrantInnen, die in der Bundesrepublik leben, fast nie zum Ausgangspunkt politischer und öffentlicher Debatten werden, werden Türken, Araber oder pauschal die Moslems immer wieder fokussiert.'[48]

The problem of multiculturalism lies therefore in the fact that not all ethnicities in the 'multi'-prefix are included in the debate, while those ethnic minorities that want to become part of the homogeneous majority should ideally achieve this without loosing their uniqueness in order to create an enriching national ethnic pluralism, as mentioned by Yuval-Davis. It comes as no surprise then that Baumann concludes: 'A multicultural nation-state is, in some ways, a contradiction in terms.'[49] Yet, just as assimilation to a German *Leitkultur* seems ironic when German politicians do even not know what it actually entails, a definition of it would always need to be changing over time anyway. As Baumann explains, culture is

> two things at once, that is, a dual discursive construction. It is the conservative 're'-construction of a reified essence at one moment, and the pathfinding new

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44 Thurm, Frida, 'Und woher kommst du wirklich?', *Zeit Online* (Zeit.de, 16 September 2014) <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2014-08/deutsch-identitaet-migranten-sarrazin> [accessed 10 January 2015].

45 Ibid.

46 Cf. Sarrazin, Thilo, 'Zuwandering und Integration' in *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2010) pp. 255-330.

47 Bonnett, Alastair, 'Constructions of Whiteness in European and American Anti-Racism', in Werbner, Pnina, and Tariq Modood, eds., *Debating Cultural Hybridity – Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, (Zed Books Ltd: London and New Jersey, 1997), pp. 173-92 (p. 188).

48 Güler Saied, p. 138.

49 Ibid., p. 32.

> construction of a processual agency at the next moment. It vacillates between two poles, and therein lies the sophistication and dialectical beauty of the concept.[50]

Thus, the constant development of a culture is linked to constant change and vacillation. In particular, the 'conservative ''re''-construction of a reified essence at one moment, and the pathfinding new construction of a processual agency' mentioned by Baumann can refer to processes of cultural hybridisation, where the blending of an old cultural element with a new one creates and re-creates cultural traditions. This notion of culture that exists through cultural mixing thus challenges the wishful ideal of having a homogeneous national culture linked to a conserved past, and which remains identifiable through its supposedly 'natural' and hence unchangeable state. Indeed, as German cultural scholar Tom Cheesman summarises: '[t]he challenge that hybrid cultural innovations present to traditional, homogeneous and monolithic concepts of national identity is a focus of much debate.'[51]

Indeed, within the German *Leitkultur* debate, cultural hybridity can be understood as a threat since Baumann, for example, explains: '[i]n dealing with strangers, it helps one to stereotype them with the greatest of ease and to make common sense predictions of how these others might think and what they might do next.'[52] Yet, since processes of cultural hybridisation can alter the fixed image of the stereotype, Baumann poses the question: 'How do I predict the opinions of anyone with a crosscutting or multidimensional identity?'[53] It is this lack of being able to stereotype in order to help make sense of the 'other' that seems to be overwhelming for some Germans, despite multidimensional or crosscutting identities having become a normal feature in their society. With multiculturalism being a living part of contemporary Germany, it seems as if some politicians and citizens rather need to re-frame the term *'multi-kulti'* as 'a proactive awareness of these crosscutting cultural cleavages and a culture concept to deal with them.'[54]

Such a culture concept, as Baumann proposes, can be detected by 15-year-old Germans Dzeko and Kamyar who featured in Thurm's aforementioned article. Thurm thus writes that the two boys are faced with the common situation in which 'selbst die

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50 Ibid., p. 95. The term 'culture' is used throughout this thesis to describe two things. On the one hand, it will serve as an umbrella term to capture national traditions and ideologies that unite an imagined community as being German. On the other hand, the term appears in the context of 'hip-hop culture.' The latter serves to describe a lifestyle, which adheres to the aesthetic norms, artistic practices and communal beliefs that shape hip-hop.

51 Cheesman, Tom, 'Polyglot Pop Politics – Hip Hop in Germany', *Debatte,* 6 (2), (1998) 191-214 (p. 193).

52 Baumann, p. 84.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 85.

angepasstesten und integrationswilligsten Kinder ein Problem haben, solange an ihren Namen oder ihrem Aussehen zu erkennen ist, dass ihre Familie nicht seit zehn Generationen in Deutschland lebt.'[55] Yet, she also reports that through recording a rap track called 'Generation Sarrazin (Deutsch so wie Du),' the two boys can assert that they are

> Deutsche und begreifen sich als solche – und haben doch das Gefühl, dass andere das immer wieder hinterfragen. Es beginnt bei der Frage nach der ‚wirklichen' Herkunft und hört bei Sarrazins Thesen auf. [...] Doch sie schaffen sich auch eine neue, ganz eigene Identität,[56] indem sie die deutschen Alltagscodes, die sie von klein auf kennen, mit dem kombinieren, was ihnen aus dem Heimatland und der Religion ihrer Eltern übermittelt wird. Die Zugehörigkeit zu diesen beiden Kulturen muss für sie kein ‚Dazwischen' sein, sondern kann ein ‚Zusammen' werden, aus dem sie ein neues Selbstbewusstsein schöpfen.[57]

However, by rapping about their new, combined and hence hybrid identities, these and other German rappers take the risk that their lyrical presentations might not resonate as a new form of Germanness to the common listener. This dilemma has already been hinted at in Harris' introductory statement to the thesis. Even Thurm refers to the foreign *'Heimatland'* of Szeko and Kamyar's parents, despite the fact that they could have been born in Germany, as well. This problematic of the perception of the German hybrid has also been highlighted by Todd Herzog who, in particular, investigates German writers of Jewish and hence 'other' ethnic heritage.

Herzog begins his analysis by re-stating that in the past German national discourse, the culturally hybrid human being had a specific name, that of the *'Mischling*,' and was viewed 'as a pathological character and held the floor in German racial science from the late 1800s until 1945.'[58] Hybridity was therefore initially treated as a racial category. Herzog elaborates that the *Mischling* was also seen as 'a particularly dangerous figure in German racial science, alternately a psychologically unbalanced hysteric lacking a stable identity and a dangerous monster whose "repressed" identity returns in an even more concentrated form.'[59] Relating this socioal threat to contemporary Germany, Güler Saied claims that this concept of human race continues to live on as a translation of 'culture': 'Nachdem der Rassebegriff in Europa durch den Nationalsozialismus negativ belegt ist, wird in diesem Zusammenhang der Kulturbegriff als Markierung von

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55 Thurm.

56 Cf. Fouroutan, Naika in '„Junge Muslime möchten das Land mit gestalten" – Naika Foroutan im Gespräch', *Goethe Institut: Migration und Integration* (Goethe.de, June 2012) <http://www.goethe.de/lhr/prj/daz/mag/igd/de9494836.htm> [accessed 22 January 2015].

57 Thurm.

58 Herzog, Todd, 'Hybrids and Mischlinge: Translating Anglo-American Cultural Theory into German', *The German Quarterly,* 70 (1), (1997), 1-17 (p. 2).

59 Ibid., pp. 2/3.

Differenz herangezogen.'[60] From this perspective, the issue of the multicultural within German political discourse could also be understood as the problematic of the multiracial or the multiethnic.[61]

Compellingly, Herzog's studies on contemporary Jewish German authors, who write for fellow German citizens and therefore market themselves in their homeland, reveals an issue of the multicultural, which indeed translates to a problematic of the multiethnic: the impossibility of the hybrid identity to be accepted as German. By comparing four authors, Herzog observes that as soon as German Jewish writers even reveal a slight identification with Judaism, they are understood and essentialised as Jews-*non*-German, and therefore as an 'other,' despite expressing themselves in the shared German language. In Herzog's words, 'the German Jewish hybrid is read at all levels as the Jew in hiding whose ethnicity suddenly becomes visible,'[62] concluding that 'not only does contemporary cultural theory[63] not provide a way to escape this model, a path by which to get beyond the body as a marker of identity, it, in fact, seems to repeat this fascination with the difference – even the monstrosity – of the hybrid'.[64]

Thus, the success of cultural hybridisation as a strategy towards the normalisation of cultural or ethnic pluralism within the nation-state is dependent on the hybrid individual's reception by the consumer. While Herzog's study reveals the difficulties for mixed identities to be accepted as fully German, other analyses on similar topics concerning literary or lyrical expressions in Germany have also shown other outcomes. Returning to rap, Cheesman, for instance, observes that 'the integration of ethnic minority youth has been achieved de facto in pop, as nowhere else in German culture.'[65] He even suggests that the

> the encounter between hip hop subculture and the state and market institutions may yet be in some sense cultural models for much-needed broader initiatives in social policy. Certainly, this seems to be the only sector in German public sphere in which both ethnic plurality and bi- and multilingualism are taken entirely for granted.[66]

In line with Cheesman's outlook, this thesis will further investigate this supposedly normalised state of pluralism in German hip-hop, despite the differing and often problematic perspectives of multiculturalism in contemporary German political debate. The insights will therefore contribute to a better understanding of current cultural

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60 Güler Saied, p. 146.
61 Cf. Ibid., p. 155.
62 Herzog, p. 8.
63 The contemporary cultural theory mentioned by Herzog will be discussed in Chapter 1.3.2.
64 Herzog, p. 15.
65 Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 194.
66 Ibid., p. 199.

dynamics that are shaping Germany's urban society. In order to highlight the scholarly relevance and the positioning of this research project within the academic field, the next section will provide a review of current scholarship on hip-hop culture.

1.2 Literature Review

Hip-hop culture has been subject to German academic research since its establishment in Germany during the 1980s. The majority of early hip-hop scholars focussed on the ways in which this artistic movement was adapted by Germany's minority youth who re-translated hip-hop into their own strategy of cultural resistance. These observations were often embedded in a Turkish-German discourse, with the engagement in hip-hop positioned as an expression against mainstream German culture (Kaya, 1997 and 2003; Elflein, 1998; Menrath 2001; Soysal, 2004; Loh and Güngör, 2002). Yet, Cheesman also writes in 1998 that 'German-Turkish working class youth, in particular, have adopted and adapted rap in this manner – although Germany's hip-hop subculture is extremely diverse, and in fact white rappers have hitherto achieved most chart success.'[67] While therefore already revealing the participation of ethnic German rappers, Cheesman observes that, in general, 'rappers in Europe are seen and heard as "voices from the ethnic ghetto", speaking out on behalf of new generations of post-migrant "communities."'[68]

This perception coincides with Arlene Tickner's observation that 'the ways it [hip-hop] is appropriated in different settings are intimately linked to how specific social actors, primarily marginal youth, experience the world and the places they occupy in it.'[69] However, more recent studies on rap in Germany reveal other trends regarding hip-hop culture's purpose and positioning in German society (Templeton, 2006; Güler Saied, 2012; Stehle, 2012). In her comprehensive analysis of contemporary rap in Germany, Güler Saied, for example, criticises that '[d]ie Medien schaffen einen Mythos, der lautet „Durch die Musik raus aus dem Ghetto und raus aus der Kriminalität".'[70] Stefan Burkard's study *Hip-Hop am Pranger – Wie die Medien eine Kultur verteufeln* even affirms that German media aim at representing German rap as a negative and even harmful socio-cultural movement, despite promoting it as an escape from crime.[71] Güler Saied attempts to deconstruct this mediated image of rap by explaining that the

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67 Ibid., p. 192.
68 Ibid., p. 191.
69 Tickner, Arlene B, 'Aquí en el Ghetto: Hip-Hop in Colombia, Cuba and Mexico', *Latin American Politics and Society,* 50 (3), (2008), 121-46 (p. 122).
70 Güler Saied, p. 160.
71 Cf. Burkard, Stefan, *HipHop am Pranger – Wie die Medien eine Kultur verteufeln* (Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag, 2013).

dissemination of lyrical messages concerning social deviance or racial marginality 'geht somit weder im Rap noch im Alltag von Jugendlichen mit sogenannter Migrationsgeschichte selbst aus, sondern ist immer als interaktionistische Reaktion auf hegemoniale Zuschreibungs- und Stigmatisierungs-Praktiken bezogen.'[72] In other words, the assumed relationship between engaging in rap and belonging to a harmful and disrespectful ethnic and social minority in Germany is not cultivated within the art form as such, but maintained by the media as a provocative marketing strategy.

Güler Saied therefore concludes that the 'Bezug auf ethnische Kategorien dient in diesem [Rap] Kontext vielmehr dazu, die Zugehörigkeit zu der deutschen Gesellschaft zum Ausdruck zu bringen und ist somit eine politische Forderung nach Anerkennung und Zugehörigkeit und Gleichberechtigung.'[73] This perspective on German rap's intentions is also shared by Maria Stehle, who researched the 'ghetto voices' expressed in contemporary German literary texts, films and rap music. She emphasises the existing pluralism of rappers' different expressions of Germanness:

> non-white Germans use the idea of 'nation' to claim citizenship and challenge and change notions of national belonging. Some artists [...] shift this demand for citizenship to a reassertion of white Germanness. Some artists use rap and hip-hop soundscapes to claim essentialized notions of the other, non-German national belonging, [...]; others reject Germanness and consciously place themselves outside of any national discourses; yet others consciously frame their perceived otherness as a positive – and new – kind of German identification.[74]

This thesis especially builds on Stehle's last observation pertaining to the positive German identification expressed through rap. In so doing, this study also includes 'white' German hip-hop artists, engaging in Inez H Templeton claims on the importance of looking at all skin colours that participate in German rap. During her research on non-Germans, Afro-Germans and Germans who rap in Berlin, Templeton writes that the 'intersection of hip-hop music and youth identities in Germany is not just an issue for non-whites. Unpacking complicated notions of German identity and looking at different negotiations with both Germanness and hip hop culture, sheds much light on contemporary German society and culture'.[75]

While rap music has provided a platform from which to present new and different national identity formations, these recent studies also highlight an important link between hip-hop culture and wider discourses on national identity, despite a common

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72 Güler Saied, p. 284.
73 Ibid., p. 284.
74 Stehle, Maria, *Ghetto Voices in Contemporary German Culture* (New York: Camden House, 2012), p. 151.
75 Templeton, p. 212.

trend in the 'burgeoning literature on globalization [which] has often argued that established national allegiances and forms of organization are becoming increasingly irrelevant in a world of intensifying flows of people, products, ideas and images.'[76] This thesis supports the notion that national identity continues to be relevant for contemporary culture and society, and therefore aims at examining the ways in which hip-hop culture can help understand the different formations and expressions of identity within two hip-hop communities in Germany.

By narrowing the national focus to the two cities of Hamburg and Oldenburg, this thesis not only expands hip-hop scholarship on national identity constructions, it also adds to the existing scholarship of ethnographic studies conducted on local German hip-hop communities, since Hamburg and Oldenburg have remained unexamined by previous ethnographic hip-hop studies. The cities, which have featured most commonly in these studies, comprise Berlin (Kaya, 1997, 2003 and 2007; Soysal, 2004, Templeton, 2006), Frankfurt am Main (Bennet 1999 and 2000; Loh and Güngör 2003) and Mannheim (Menrath, 2001; Birken-Silverman, 2003). Bennett's observations on hip-hop practised in Frankfurt am Main especially highlights that 'im Rahmen der zeitgenössischen Gesellschaft [ist] das „Lokale" nicht nur ein hoch komplexer, sondern auch ein hoch bestrittener Raum geworden, der unter dem Aufschwung miteinander ringender und oft gegensätzlicher Ideale leidet.'[77] In this sense, Hamburg and Oldenburg are not treated as two holistic entities but rather serve as urban arenas in which to assess the complexity and heterogeneity of Germany's hip-hop communities.

Furthermore, this study sees itself as a contribution to and continuation of Murray Forman's insights on race, space and place in rap practices. In his book *The 'hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* Forman writes that '[t]he "city" (or, more appropriately, cities) is central to the discussion of race, space, place, and hip-hop.'[78] Compellingly, previous studies which have focussed on hip-hop's socio-urban manifestation in Germany have not considered its complex urban entirety but have mostly examined a certain spatial condition or attribute, such as 'the street' or 'the ghetto' (Klein and Friedrich, 2003; Schröer, 2009; Friedrich, 2010; Stehle, 2012). Thus, Friedrich and Klein, for instance, conclude that the emphasis on 'the street' in rap becomes 'vor allem ein Ausstattungsmerkmal, ein theatralisches Mittel, um lokale

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[76] Skey, Michael, 'Why do Nations Matter? The Struggle for Belonging and Security in an Uncertain World', *British Journal of Sociology,* 64 (1), (2013), 81-98 (p. 81).

[77] Bennett, Andy, 'Hip-Hop am Main: Die Lokalisierung von Rap-Musik und HipHop-Kultur', in Androutsopoulos, ed., *HipHop – Globale Kultur, Lokale Praktiken,* pp. 26-42 (p. 29).

[78] Forman, Murray, *The 'hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002), p. 35.

Identität herzustellen und den Glauben an Authentizität zu befördern.'[79] This relationship between particularly deviant urban spaces and hip-hop authenticity is related to a dominant trend established in US-American commercial rap, whereby according to Forman,

> the conflation of the ghetto as a privileged sociospatial site and an idealized image of black authenticity within hip-hop discourse has continually threatened to override other possible images of lived cultural space among the hip-hop generation, regardless of one's racial identity.[80]

Since this theatrical framing of the urban ghetto has featured most prominently in commercial German gangsta rap, this thesis aims to deconstruct the ghettoesque spatial discourse that has influenced the common image of German rap. In order to do so, this analysis treats the city, or a particular urban attribute, beyond its function as a theatrical device where 'the symbolic meanings of spaces and places both reflect and affect the ways in which race, class, gender, generational identities, and so on are constructed and understood.'[81] Rather, it will look at the variety and diversity of spaces, both material and metaphorical, within a city, and their appropriation within hip-hop's different artistic practices, meanings and messages.

This wider focus on urban space goes hand in hand with the inclusion of hip-hop's four main art forms. Since urban spatial analyses on hip-hop culture have thus far centred on rap music, this thesis aims at unveiling whether urban space and identity discourses are treated differently by hip-hop's other elements, such as 'through the sonic appropriation of aural space, the appropriation of street corners (where, at an earlier stage in hip-hop's development, rap improvisation and breakdancing were common), or appropriation of the city's architecture through the ubiquitous display of spray-painted graffiti.'[82] A significant amount of scholarship has been devoted to studies on hip-hop's other main art forms (Graffiti: Castleman, 1982; MacDonald, 2001; Van Treeck, 2003; Meier, 2007; Kaya, 2007; Hip-hop dance: Banes, 1994, Nohl, 2003; DeFrantz, 2004; Rode, 2006; Salaverría, 2007; Stalling Huntington, 2007; Schloss, 2009; DJing and music production: Krims, 2000; Schloss, 2004; Lepa and Pelleter, 2007; Katz, 2012). However, few have compared the different art forms' strategies of national identity constructions to their available material and imagined spaces within one urban locale.

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79 Friedrich, Malte and Gabriele Klein, 'Populäre Stadtansichten. Bildinszenierungen des Urbanen im HipHop', Androutsopoulos, ed., *HipHop – Globale Kultur, Lokale Praktiken*, pp. 85-101 (p. 87).

80 Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 61.

81 Ibid., p. 59.

82 Ibid., p. 42.

Hence, this thesis will present the first study that considers the ways hip-hop artists occupy, understand and experience their urban space, deeming it relevant towards understanding their ways of constructing a German identity for themselves. In order to grasp the interconnectedness between space, culture and German identity throughout this study, the comparative analyses will be guided by a three-dimensional theoretical framework, which will be introduced in the following section.

1.3 Theoretical Overview

1.3.1 Spatiality – The Material and Metaphorical Cityspaces of Hip-Hop

> Which spatial modes are of most significance to the cultural processes and social practices that underlie the hip-hop culture, and through what spatial apparatuses is the relative significance expressed and articulated?[83]

In order to answer these questions posed by Forman, first of all it must be clarified what kind of 'space' is being addressed throughout this thesis. As the research project is concerned with understanding a socio-cultural phenomenon, which is tied to an urban environment, it seems most useful to engage in ideas of space that have been subject to the wider *spatial turn* in humanities. According to urban geographer Edward Soja, this space constitutes

> *gesellschaftlich produzierter Raum.* Das Wort Verräumlichung wird manchmal verwendet um sicherzustellen, dass nicht nur der physikalische Raum gemeint ist. Wir meinen weder den Raum der Physik noch den Raum der Natur, wenn wir von neuem Raumdenken reden. Wir meinen gesellschaftlich erschaffenen Raum im Sinne eines dynamischen Prozesses.[84]

While Soja has been a prominent contributor to the *spatial turn* since the late 1980s, the initial 'turn' dates back to the 1960s. Its beginning has most notably been attributed to French scholars Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault who began to address the importance of socially produced space in everyday contexts.[85] Ultimately, the aim was to equate spatial thinking to historical thinking when analysing social and cultural structures. According to Soja, this means

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83 Ibid., p. 9.

84 Soja, Edward W, 'Vom „Zeitgeist" zum „Raumgeist". New Twists on the Spatial Turn', in Döring, Jörg and Tristan Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2008), pp. 241-62 (pp. 252/3). This German translation by Thomas La Presti and Jörg Döring provides the only written and published transcript of the original talk by Soja.

85 Cf. Ibid., pp. 241-62.

> dass das, was wir im Hinblick auf die Geschichte annehmen, auch für Raum gilt: Alles, was existiert, jemals existiert hat, je existieren wird, hat eine wichtige räumliche Dimension, und eine kritische räumliche Perspektive auf alles, was als existent denkbar ist, kann uns eine wesentliche Hilfe sein, die Welt zu verstehen.[86]

Thus, the *spatial turn* was mobilised as a response to a previous historical dominance, which privileged historical accounts over spatial ones in order to make sense of social and cultural dynamics. It is this unbalanced perspective, which Soja aims to counteract in his book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places* where he looks at spatial, historical as well as social contexts *simultaneously,* since these perspectives 'contain each other; they cannot successfully be understood in isolation or epistemologically privileged separately'.[87] Soja calls this triad of spatiality, historicality and sociality the ontological 'trialectics of being ' (THSP: 71).

It is this trialectics that will also frame this research project, for the art forms of hip-hop are deeply linked to the 'postindustrial city, which provided the context for creative development among hip hop's earliest innovators, [and] shaped their cultural terrain, access to space, materials, and education'[88] within a desolate social environment. By taking hip-hop's trialectics of being into consideration, the idea is that the combined insights will provide a more detailed understanding of the way hip-hop has evolved into becoming a German cultural movement and how, in so doing, it reflects upon Germany's urban, cultural and social landscapes.

Beginning the theoretical overview with Soja's spatial component of the trialectics, the study will appropriate Soja's terminology in order to identify physical and imagined urban spaces that appear meaningful for the hip-hop communities of Oldenburg and Hamburg. Hence, the adaption of Soja's spaces relates to 'cityspace,' which 'refers to the city as a historical-social-spatial phenomenon, but *with its intrinsic spatiality highlighted* for interpretive and explanatory purposes.'[89] Soja distinguishes this intrinsic spatiality by dividing it into 'firstspaces,' 'secondspaces' and 'thirdspaces.'[90]

The 'firstspace' serves to define the 'human occupance of the surface of the earth, the relations between society and nature, the architectonics and resultant geographies of the human "built environment"' (THSP: 75). 'Firstspaces' are therefore acknowledged

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86 Ibid., p. 252.

87 Soja, Edward W, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Pub., 1996), p. 72. (In the following quoted as THSP).

88 Rose, Tricia, *Black Noise – Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), p. 34.

89 Soja, Edward W, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2000), p. 8.

90 Soja's 'trialectics of spatiality' has been heavily influenced by Henri Lefebvre's previous differentiation between perceived, conceived and lived spaces (cf. THSP: 74).

by their objective, material and factual characteristics. In the 'secondspace,' on the other hand, 'spatial knowledge is primarily produced through discursively devised representations of space, through the spatial workings of the mind' (THSP: 75). Thus, 'secondspaces' are imagined and subjective spaces in contrast to 'firstspaces' and are 'entirely ideational, made up of projections into the empirical world from conceived or imagined geographies' (THSP: 75). Yet, Soja emphasises that this 'does not mean that there is no material reality, no Firstspace, but rather that the knowledge of this material reality is comprehended essentially through thought, as *res cogito*, literally 'thought things' (THSP: 75).

The relevance of distinguishing between these spatialities is, according to Soja, due to the fact that

> many in the so-called spatial disciplines (Geography, Architecture, Urban and Regional Studies, and City Planning, with capital letters used to signify the formally constituted discipline) as well as scholars in other disciplined fields tended to concentrate almost entirely on only one of these modes of thinking, that is either on Firstspace or Secondspace perspectives (THSP: 10).

In an attempt to bridge the divided notions and investigations of space, Soja introduces the 'thirdspace.' This space proposes a new academic awareness of spatiality by fusing the 'first-' and 'secondspaces' into a third perspective. Soja describes this 'thirdspace' as a 'product of "thirding" of the spatial imagination, the creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends well beyond them in scope, substance, and meaning' (THSP: 11). In other words, the 'thirdspace' is a subjective space in which physical and imagined worlds come together to create the living reality. It captures the way in which human subjects culturally and socially perceive the 'firstspace' when situated within it. This all-encompassing space ultimately opens up 'an-Other [sic] way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality – historicality – sociality' (THSP: 10).

This differentiation of spaces in Soja's terms seems particularly useful for an analysis of hip-hop culture. The artistic performance and lyrical messages of rap, for instance, comprise

> the physical city and its material features, including architectural edifices, the above- and belowground crossroads, and the public and private spaces within delineated geographic boundary, as well as the symbolic city, which is to say

> the representational city, encompassing images, verbal articulations, or other artistic expressions of urban cultures, experiences, and identities.[91]

While Forman's brief observations therefore reveal an inherent distinction between 'first-,' 'second-,' and potentially even 'thirdspaces' in rap productions, it also raises the question whether hip-hop's other art forms employ these spaces in the same way. This assumption is based on Forman's identification of communicative forms within all of hip-hop's elements, since the

> call and response in rap, whether referring to what are termed 'shout outs' (in the positive) or 'disses'[92] (in the negative), the use of sampled musical passages, or recordings that comment on or appropriate the work of other artists does in fact offer a cultural connection across time and space. So, too, do the physical confrontations of break-dance competitions or the cross-spatial circulation of names and identities through graffiti art and tagging (the unsanctioned writing of names or crew logos on walls and other public surfaces).[93]

Dancers who perform on 'firstspaces' at live 'thirdspace' events will almost always communicate their art form directly to their opponent or audience. Music producers will however only disseminate their sampled musical messages to an audience in a mediated form, where the spatial component becomes referenced and where spatial communication is therefore created in an imagined 'secondspace.' Graffiti artists, on the other hand, need to communicate their art form by writing on 'firstspaces,' such as on walls or other public surfaces, for their art form to be understood as graffiti art. Lastly, rap has been successfully implemented in all spatial spheres, since it can communicate *about* a 'secondspace' through lyrics, as well as *in* a 'firstspace' through the rapper's presence at a concert in front of a live audience.

Having thus explored the different theoretical approaches to cityspaces it should also be mentioned that 'space' in critical theory can also signify a non-physical location. German urban geographer Julia Lossau, for instance, writes that 'symbolische Semantik [des Raums] findet sich insbesondere in poststrukturalistischen, differenz- und machttheoretischen orientierten Strömen. „Raum" fungiert als Chiffre für die Anerkennung unterschiedlicher Stellen, Orte oder Standpunkte, von denen aus Bedeutung in kontextspezifischer Art und Weise produziert wird'.[94] Such symbolic 'spaces' resonate, for example, with post-colonialist Homi K Bhabha's use of the 'third space,' which refers to a moment in time in which the process of cultural mixing or

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91 Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 35.

92 To 'diss' means to disrespect, primarily achieved by verbally insulting a real or imagined opponent in rhyme form.

93 Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 66.

94 Lossau, Julia, 'Spatial Turn,' in Eckhard, Frank, ed., *Handbuch Stadtsoziologie* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012), pp. 185-98 (p. 187).

hybridity appears. This approach will serve to capture the historicality of hip-hop's trialectics as presented in the following section.

1.3.2 Historicality – Hip-Hop as a Culturally Hybrid Art Movement

According to Soja, Bhabha's theory of the 'third space' 'is occasionally teasingly on the edge of being a spatially ungrounded literary trope, a floating metaphor for a critical historical consciousness that inadvertently masks a continued privileging of temporality over spatiality' (THSP: 141/2). In other words, Bhabha's 'third space' is embedded in a historical narrative, which points to a crucial diversion from Soja's conception of 'thirdspace,' both orthographically and epistemologically. While Soja's 'thirdspace,' spelled as one, derives from a physical spatiality, Bhabha's 'third space,' written separately, is rooted in a cultural-*historical* discourse, as the 'non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures'.[95] This understanding serves to frame the temporal development of hip-hop culture in Germany and its process of cultural hybridisation, with Alan O'Connor noting that 'the notion of cultural hybridity seems particularly attractive to studies of popular music. After all, nothing seems to travel so easily as a musical riff, drum rhythm and subcultural style; and in the process to mutate into a musical hybrid.'[96]

Yet, as previously touched upon by Herzog,[97] the concept of hybridity rather implied a negative status before describing the 'attractive' movement and composition of music and style, especially regarding the biological mixing of human races. In German Nazi history the demand for a racially pure German *Volk* was based on the idea that racial or ethnic crossbreeding would reduce the chance of survival. Racial or ethnic 'hybrids' were therefore strategically eliminated from Germany's social landscape in the early 20th century.[98] While Papastergiadis continues to assert that in the 'antagonistic framework of institutional politics, hybridity is usually confined to a negative position,'[99] the tainted concept of hybridity eventually became re-appropriated within critical theory as a metaphorical and cultural extension of its original use. In so doing, the adoption of the term 'cultural hybridity' shifted to refer to 'a person who represents the blending of traits from diverse cultures or traditions, or even more broadly it can be

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95 Bhabha, Homi K, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 312. (In the following quoted as LOC).

96 O'Connor, Alan, 'Local Scenes and Dangerous Crossroads: Punk and Theories of Cultural Hybridity', *Popular Music,* 21 (1), (2002), 225-36 (p. 225).

97 Cf. Herzog (p. 2) mentioned in 1.1 A Multicultural Germany? on p. 11.

98 Papastergiadis, Nikos, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterriolization and Hybridity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000), p. 173.

99 Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 58.

a culture, or element of culture, derived from unlike sources; that is, something heterogeneous in origin or composition.'[100]

In his book *The Location of Culture* Bhabha positions the concept of 'cultural hybridity' in a post-colonial context, explaining that hybrid or 'postcolonial temporalities force us to rethink the sign of history w*ithin* those languages, political or literary, which designate the people "as one"' (LOC: 220). He furthermore emphasises cultural hybridity's ability to weaken and ultimately to deconstruct previously uncontested concepts of cultural authority or political supremacy, especially in contrast to the hegemonic and holistic notion of the nation state or of Western colonial empires. Thus, Bhabha explains that

> [a]t the point at which the precept attempts to objectify itself as a generalised knowledge or a normalising, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is *unequal* but its articulation may be *equivocal.* Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism.[101]

The refusal of the binary specifically presents itself in what Bhabha terms the 'intervention of the Third Space of enunciation which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process' (LOC: 54). He elaborates that '[s]uch an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past [sic], kept alive in the tradition of the People' (LOC: 54). The 'third space' can therefore be seen as a rupture of the temporal sequencing of a chronological national narrative, which has been constructed and maintained in order to make sense of one's belonging.

At this point it will also be noted that not every culturally hybrid process, product or person results in a cultural space of thirdness. Cultural hybridity does not need to exist in a new state, which the concept of the 'third space' suggests, in order to challenge existing norms, values and realities. Rather, the sheer process of mixing without creating something new is equally an act of re-organising previously opposed and separated phenomena. The historical perspective of this analysis therefore enables to trace the processes with which a foreign cultural art form, such as hip-hop, can become representative of something familiar through cultural 'hybridization, that is, an appropriation via negotiation on the incoming pop culture products based on the

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[100] Stross, Brian, 'The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 112 (445), (1999), 254-67 (p. 254).

[101] Bhabha, Homi K, 'Culture's in Between', *Artforum International,* 32 (1), (1993), 167-70 (p. 168).

specific structure, traditions, and needs or interests of the indigenous culture(s).'[102] Hip-hop's art forms in particular seem to be an interesting cultural movement through which to observe this hybridisation. Not only has Tasek mentioned hip-hop's development into an authentic and relevant German language but in the case of popping dancer Azad, hip-hop has also been treated as a cultural 'Mixer, der Sachen zusammennimmt und daraus was Neues macht oder auf einer ganz anderen, neuen Ebene präsentiert, weil es rebelliert gegen Sachen die da vorher da waren.'[103]

Furthermore, a comparison between ethnically German and culturally hybrid hip-hop practitioners in this study will offer additional insights into determining how hip-hop culture has been able to resonate meaningfully amongst these supposedly disparate cultural sensibilities. By creating a German cultural product through cultural exchange, Oldenburg's and Hamburg's hip-hop artists ultimately

> question the dominant assumption on the relationship between traditional authenticity and contemporary culture and test the limits of artistic agency and institutional structures. From these new cultural practices in contemporary art there is a possibility to explore more broadly the impact of hybridity on the social and political landscape of modernity.[104]

These cultural practices further highlight the fact that Soja's cityspace and Bhabha's 'third space' cultivate a mutual relationship for 'the context or environment in which a hybrid is produced is so important to interpreting the meaning of the hybrid, as well as for shaping the form and destiny of the cultural hybrid, that it cannot be ignored.'[105] While Stross therefore highlights the influence of the 'first-,' 'second-,' and 'thirdspace' experiences on the hybrid artist and the art form, one may also consider the hybridisation of Soja's spaces. This occurs when the 'secondspace' identity of a place does not relate to its actual 'firstspace' materiality. Such a hybrid spatiality still creates a 'thirdspace' experience but one which exists as a culturally hybrid construct. In this case the 'thirdspace' can be treated as a 'third space,' as well. This rather complex overlapping of terminology of spatiality is important to emphasise, as it becomes relevant towards determining the hybridity of Germanness when considering the location of hip-hop performances. In order to bridge the connection between cultural hybridity, its spatial manifestation and, as mentioned by Papastergiadis, its impact on the socio-political landscape of modernity, the following section will provide the final theoretical component of hip-hop's trialectics of being, namely 'sociality.'

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[102] Auer, Peter, 'A Post-Script: Code-switch and Social Identity,' *Journal of Pragmatics,* 37 (2005), 403-10 (p. 406).
[103] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[104] Papastergiadis, Nikos, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence**:** Places and Flows in Contemporary Art and Culture', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 22 (4), (2005), 39-64 (p. 40).
[105] Stross, p. 266.

1.3.3 Sociality – The Presentation and Management of the National Self

This third and final section of the theoretical overview presents two micro-sociological theories derived from sociologist Erving Goffman. The first stems from Goffman's book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity.* The concept of stigmatised identity relates to the racial concept of cultural hybridity when one considers that the 'origin of hybridity has been drenched in the shame-soaked ideology of miscegenation and cut through with stigmatic associations'.[106]

According to Goffman, Anglo-American and hence Western society 'is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will value and treat him in an appropriate way.'[107] In other words, one's actions and appearances are always tied to preconceived norms, values and practices, which are interpreted by an other:

> when a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his 'social identity' [...] We lean on these anticipations that we have, transforming them into normative expectations, into righteously presented demands.[108]

Goffman delves deeper into this everyday social process by observing the ways in which 'evidence can arise of his [the stranger's] possessing an attribute that makes him different from the others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of less desirable kind' (STGM: 3/4). Goffman calls this attribute that affects the ways individuals are perceived and judged by others a 'stigma' and lists three categories of 'stigmata.'

The first refers to physical disabilities, which Goffman describes as the 'abominations of the body' (STGM: 4). If physically-related features are not the source of a social 'stigma,' Goffman reverts to the second category that comprises 'blemishes of individual character' (STGM: 4). More specifically, this stigma can be a reflection of a 'weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs, and dishonesty' (STGM: 4). The third 'stigma' type that Goffman mentions is 'the tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion' (STGM: 4). The 'tribe' thus defines the cultural characteristics of a person that can, for example, comprise language, skin colour or the participation in particular culturally-related rituals.

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[106] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 60.
[107] Goffman, Erving, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), p. 13. (In the following quoted as PSEL).
[108] Goffman, Erving, *Stigma: Notes on The Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1963), p. 2. (In the following quoted as STGM).

The importance in addressing and theorising social 'stigmata' lies in the fact that they have the power to make an other be 'reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one' (STGM: 3). In this ideological sense, 'stigmata' are always a social construct and as such never constitute a fixed reality. Their creation is rather motivated by their disruption to a common, cultivated notion of a 'stereotype of what a given type of individual should be' (STGM: 3). Therefore, 'stigmata' are deeply connected to personal bias or to subjectively constructed identity norms. Indeed, while Goffman chooses to call the stigmatised characteristic of a person his or her 'attribute,' he makes clear that an 'attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself' (STGM: 3).

In order for a 'stigma' to be accepted in society, Goffman proposes the strategy of easing tension during social contacts, such as by converting the 'stigma' into a social asset. Furthermore, he suggests the strategy of 'passing' when the 'stigma' remains invisible, describing it as 'the management of undisclosed discrediting information about self' (STGM: 42). In a hip-hop context commercial African-American rappers may therefore manage their 'attribute' of black skin by purposely emphasising it as an asset in order to support their credibility as pertaining to the social and racial minority of US-American society.[109] In graffiti art practices, however, the same 'attribute' is deemed irrelevant, for the artist's physical body and hence skin colour is removed from the presentation of the artwork itself. Contrary to rap then, graffiti art 'manages stigmata like class, "race" and physical appearance by paralysing their influence.'[110] Hence, a comparison between the ways in which 'stigmata' are managed within hip-hop's individual art forms may reveal differing outcomes depending on each element's norms and practices.

By considering this relationship between 'stigma' management and hip-hop's artistic practices, further differences may even appear in terms of the 'management of Germanness.' Keeping in mind that '[s]tigma management is an offshoot of something basic in society, the stereotyping or "profiling" of our normative expectations regarding conduct and character' (STGM:51), the consideration of 'stigmata' in this analysis will provide a useful guideline in determining what the German stereotype or German cultural norms constitute. In so doing, this study will reveal the ways in which different cultural heritages, ethnic backgrounds and skin colours are 'managed' in order to become part of the German national narrative.

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[109] Cf. Rivera, Raquel Z, *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 97-100.

[110] MacDonald, Nancy, *The Graffiti Subculture: Youth, Masculinity, and Identity* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 192.

The second social theory applied in this thesis stems from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In this study, Goffman observes the ways in which people interact in everyday life under the influence of their 'firstspatial' environment. In order to theorise this socio-spatial aspect, Goffman applies theatre terminology to differentiate spaces and the behavioural norms attached to these. At the same time, the sociologist emphasises that his report 'is not concerned with aspects of theatre that creep into everyday life. It is concerned with the structure of social encounters – the structure of those entities in social life that come into being whenever persons enter one another's immediate physical presence' (PSEL: 254). Goffman distinguishes between structures that are created by direct verbal expression, by 'giving,' or by other communicative forms which Goffman terms 'giving off.' This latter form of expression presents the core of his study, relating to the 'more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind, whether this communication be purposely engineered or not' (PSEL: 4). Thus, Goffman's social theory simultaneously builds on spatiality as he shifts his focus to the 'kind of social life that is organized within the physical confines of a building' (PSEL: xi), indicating a continued interrelatedness between the three components of Soja's 'trialectics of being.'

The social encounter and presentation of the self towards an other is what Goffman defines as a social 'performance.' It comprises 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in a way any other of the participants' (PSEL: 15). At this point it needs to be clarified that aside from Goffman's understanding of performance as a social act, this study is also concerned with another understanding of performance in terms of entertaining, artistic events. Goffman's definition suits the analysis of both types of performances. This is because hip-hop norms emphasise a 'keeping it real' state of mind whilst performing on stage.[111] This suggests that staged hip-hop performances at concerts or competitions are not supposed to diverge from the artists' everyday presentations of self but should reflect their common social behaviour and identity.

Moreover, a performer may also be part of a larger performance 'team' 'who co-operate in staging a single routine' (PSEL: 79). The staging occurs on a 'front' whose physical confines are marked by its 'setting,' i.e. the 'furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the space of human action played out before, within, or upon it' (PSEL: 22). In this 'front' space, the

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[111] For an in-depth account of hip-hop culture's 'keeping it real' attitude see Friedrich, Malte, and Gabriele Klein, *Is this real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkam Verlag, 2003) as well as Menrath, Stefanie, 'Realness und Authentizität' and 'Fake', in *Represent what... Performativität und Identitäten im HipHop* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 2001), pp. 92-102.

performer also has his or her 'personal front' constructed by 'clothing; sex, age and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like' (PSEL: 24).

By identifying a 'front' region on which a performance is staged, it can be deduced that there exists a 'back' region, as well. Indeed, in contrast to the norms established in the 'front,' Goffman describes the 'back' region, which is often spatially adjacent to the 'front' as the place 'where the suppressed facts make an appearance' (PSEL: 112). These are most likely to be 'relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course' (PSEL: 112). The remaining places situated beyond the 'front' and 'back' regional discourse are described as the 'outside' (cf. PSEL: 134/5). Lastly, it remains to be said that the individuals' roles are defined by these spaces in that 'performers appear in the front and back regions; the audience appears in the front region; and the outsiders are excluded from both regions' (PSEL: 145).

The relevance of Goffman's socio-spatial divisions for analysing hip-hop culture become evident in a micro-sociological study conducted at a German hip-hop festival. By applying Goffman's social theory, German sociologist Sebastian Schröer is able to capture the interrelatedness between spaces and social class, i.e. the perks enjoyed by 'very important people' who move freely within the public *and* the backstage area of the festival versus the restricted access of the audience who remain solely in the 'front.'[112] Indeed, in order to keep the divided roles of the individuals intact, the 'front' and hence the audience are usually kept separated from the 'back' (cf. PSEL: 113). Having access to both sides, Schröer is able to compare the 'thirdspace' experiences of the 'front' contrasted to the 'back' by observing that

> [w]ährend in der *Public area* häufig (jedoch nicht immer) eine Orientierung an den gängigen szenetypischen Klischees z.B. in Bezug auf Kleidung, Verhalten und Interaktion (performatives Handeln in Form von lässigen Posen, auffallende Verwendung szenespezifischer Begriffe und Sprachcodes[)] sowie ‚perfektionierte' Kulissen bei der Inszenierung auffallen, wird im V.I.P.-Bereich ein eher spielerischer Umgang damit gepflegt.[113]

In terms of hip-hop culture, an examination of the social spaces which comprise a performative hip-hop setting may therefore provide interesting insights towards the concept and norm of 'keeping it real,' especially when examining performances in non-commercial 'settings.' This comparison will be achieved by looking at Oldenburg's hip-hop artists who engage in this art form as a leisure activity in contrast to the

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[112] Cf. Schröer, Sebastian, 'Raum und Inszenierung', in Bock, Karin, Stefan Meier, and Gunter Süss, eds., *HipHop Meets Academia: Globale Spuren eines lokalen Kulturphänomens* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2007), pp. 247-62 (p. 259).

[113] Ibid.

professional pursuit of hip-hop in Hamburg. Yet, not only does Schröer's micro-social theorisation of hip-hop's performative spaces reveal the importance of taking spaces into consideration for social analyses. It also shows that in order to do so the researcher requires being physically present in the spaces himself. This aspect will be elaborated on in the following section, shifting from theory to methodology and towards an explanation of the construction of the corpus of this study.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Constructing a Corpus

The corpus of this thesis is formed by qualitative data gathered during a period of fieldwork between January 2012 and September 2012. The qualitative approach to this research project aims at better understanding the nuances of cultural formations by taking subjective accounts into consideration and by *de*constructing the ways 'people construct the world around them, what they are doing or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offer rich insight.'[114]

However, many studies on hip-hop continue to be conducted without ethnographic insights and hence without subjective accounts.[115] This especially refers to rap music studies where the convenience of analysing lyrics and music video clips available from the Internet and therefore from the computer screen provide the simplest way of pursuing a hip-hop study. Yet, improvised rap, graffiti art, dance and DJ performances are not necessarily mediated and hence visible in the same way as the written dissemination of lyrics. These hip-hop elements still often remain undocumented, which makes ethnographic research an indispensable method through which to gain insights into and knowledge on the art forms and the artists' identity formations. This becomes even more relevant when identity is understood as 'something one performs, rather than something one is.'[116] In this sense identity is something 'contingent and relational, reacting to context and situation'[117] that needs to be captured whilst happening in conversation or in certain spaces, such as in studios, practice rooms, backstage areas. Hence, an ethnographic study on national identity in hip-hop culture

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[114] Angrosino, Michael*, Doing Ethnographic and Observational Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), p. xii.
[115] Cf. Templeton, p. 40.
[116] Castree, Noel, Rob Kitchin, and Alisdair Rogers, 'Identity', *A Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford University Press, 2013) <http://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 6 March 2014].
[117] Ibid.

allows the researcher to witness these situations and gain a more detailed and deeper comprehension of hip-hop's performative processes and negotiations of identity.

At the same time, the challenge concerning such a qualitative ethnographic study is its tendency to become too subjective. Michael Angrosino warns that inevitably 'ethnographers, who bring their own baggage with them so to speak, will produce different images of what they have observed.'[118] In order to appease this situation I have attempted to enter the ethnographic field with the least baggage possible. Without having had a personal interest in, nor knowledge of hip-hop's aesthetics aside from the passive consumption of hip-hop dance performances, I was certain that my lack of previous personal engagement in hip-hop culture would secure an objectivity that was not distorted by pre-formed opinions, tastes or biases.

In order to gain a balanced insight into Oldenburg's and Hamburg's lived hip-hop scenes, the time spent in the field was divided between the first three and a half months in Oldenburg and the latter five and a half months in Hamburg. The reason for this time frame is related to Oldenburg's small cityspace and the fact that its current hip-hop movement only comprises two elements: rap and graffiti art. In Hamburg, however, hip-hop's presence is grounded in rap, graffiti art, dance as well as in live DJing and music production, thus providing a wider range of material to cover and more time required to do so as compared to Oldenburg. Hence, the corpus of this thesis consists of six case studies framed by the four main elements of hip-hop practiced in Hamburg and the aforementioned two which remain actively pursued in Oldenburg.

By conducting a comparative hip-hop analysis which looks at the same cultural formation at different sites, this corpus is moreover shaped by a multi-sited ethnographic study. According to cultural anthropologist Marcus George, such an approach

> claims that any ethnography of a cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system, and therefore cannot be understood only in terms of the conventional single-site mise-en-scene of ethnographic research, assuming indeed it is the cultural formation, produced in several different locales, rather than the conditions of a particular set of subjects that is the object of study.[119]

While this thesis does not seek to explore the depths of multi-sited ethnography, a side effect of employing such an approach did indeed reveal two very different fieldwork experiences, which consisted of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, despite examining the same cultural movement via the same ethnographic

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[118] Angrosino, p. 11.

[119] Marcus, George E, 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography', *Annual Review Anthropology*, 24 (1995), 95-117 (p. 96).

methods. The following three parts will elaborate on these three methodological approaches, including close readings of recorded documentations of hip-hop's individual art forms.

1.4.2 Participant Observation

According to the editors of *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, participant observation is an ethnographic method designed 'to collect data in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied.'[120] It is therefore a precondition that the researcher is in the field, on site, where he or she can observe, participate and conduct first-hand empirical investigation. Angrosino furthermore differentiates between levels of intensity within this method. One level of participant observation, for example, is what Angrosino terms the 'participant-as-observer' in which the researcher is immersed in the scene or community while at the same time being known as the ethnographer and permitted to be doing research within the community.[121] Yet, as soon as the ethnographer is more detached from the community he or she, according to Angrosino, becomes the 'observer-as-participant.' At this level, the ethnographer will generally only interact with research participants via interviews and by observing them at selected events.[122] It is these two levels of participant observation, which shaped this research project, as well.

In Oldenburg, an immersion into the hip-hop community led me into becoming a 'participant-as-observer,' since hip-hop was primarily practiced as a personal activity and was therefore a private matter. This privacy was reflected in the rappers' domestic spatial occupancies, for rap was generally performed and recorded in living rooms, basements or bedrooms. Hence, in order to experience rap culture in Oldenburg, it was necessary for me to share these domestic, indoor and underground 'firstspaces' with a male-dominated group of hip-hop artists. In this setting, my presence as a 'participant-as-observer' further became a sign of personal confidentiality, for local hip-hop artists began sharing private problems and asking for advice from a female perspective. This dynamic can be related to Joan Neff Gurney's observations on gender's auxiliary potential during fieldwork. She explains that a female ethnographer who enters a male-dominated setting may have an advantage to gain further insight into the field by utilising her gender as an asset since it possesses less of a threat to the masculinity of

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120 Musante DeWalt, Kathleen, and Billie R DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), p. 2.
121 Angrosino, p. 6.
122 Ibid.

her subjects.[123] While this observation resonates with my fieldwork experience, my access to the almost exclusively male hip-hop events and spaces was, however, seen as a threat by the artists' female partners. At one point, for example, I was denied access to a recording session as the studio was located in the producers' flat, which was also inhabited by his partner.

Yet, beyond moving in these domestic 'firstspaces,' further participant observation in Oldenburg entailed the attendance of rap concerts (both by local rappers as well as by others who performed in Oldenburg at that time) with access to the 'front' as well as to 'back' regions. Other events included local hip-hop jams, video clip shoots, graffiti art sessions and visiting local 'halls of fame,' meaning legal graffiti walls dispersed throughout Oldenburg. These observations also revealed a tight relationship between the local rap community and the graffiti artists who, on the whole, tended to support each other's art form: CD covers for local rap albums were often designed by local graffiti artists, while the graffiti art studio was used as a background for rap video clips or as a venue to host hip-hop jams and informal rap sessions.

Following this fieldwork experience in Oldenburg, I shifted into becoming an 'observer-as-participant' in Hamburg. Here, my role as a female academic and participant observer became immediately accepted by local hip-hop artists and their partners. This difference was due to the fact that the research participants in Hamburg engaged in hip-hop as a profession. Hence, when entering the local hip-hop field I found myself in offices, recording studios, rehearsal rooms, art galleries, backstage at high-profile hip-hop events, as well as in youth centres. I therefore initially doubted my success as a fieldworker in Hamburg as I was lacking access into the hip-hop practitioners' private spheres to which I was accustomed in Oldenburg. However, I soon realised that such an insight was not required in order to conduct an equally successful study on the local artists' relationship to hip-hop. In Hamburg, hip-hop culture simply functioned through a different system and on a different level, as each art form was, for the most part, practiced as a professional occupation in separately designated spaces. Aside from attending various DJ concerts, dance battles, rap concerts and festivals, as well as halls of fame and graffiti art exhibitions, I also had the opportunity to participate in breakdance training sessions, employing my experience and knowledge as a dancer and gymnast to gain further insight into this particular art form. In the end, the two different observational experiences provided more detailed knowledge and awareness about the two local hip-hop communities than anticipated. This was furthermore

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[123] Cf. Gurney, Joan Neff, 'Female Researchers in Male Settings', in Shaffir, William B, and Robert A Stebbins, eds., *Experiencing Fieldwork: An Inside View of Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 1991), pp. 53-61 (p. 56).

supported by information gathered through personal interviews, which will be addressed in the next section.

1.4.3 Interviews

The interviews conducted for this research project followed a semi-structured format, which 'combine[s] the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data'.[124] This means that certain questions relating to the topic of investigation were pre-formulated and are given in Appendix 6.2 (p. 197).[125] The lengths of the interviews varied between twenty minutes to up to four hours depending on the available time and on the number of participants involved. In total, this provided an estimated 70 hours of interview material that has been digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed.[126]

In Oldenburg, 23 interview participants engaged in this study, while in Hamburg interviews were conducted with 29 research subjects. Due to instances in which meeting times were incompatible or interview opportunities occurred unplanned, one interview was conducted via email while four have been held on record through written notes. All interviews were given in German apart from one, which was held in English. While not all interviewees are cited, their stories and insights have shaped the overall perspective of German hip-hop culture reflected in this thesis. The interviewees were over 18 years of age and comprised hip-hop artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Some were 1st or 2nd generation immigrants whose mother and father had other nationalities, while others had one or both parents of German heritage. The interviewees were carefully chosen through previous knowledge or via personal suggestions by artists during my time in the field who also advised me to talk to rap label managers, hip-hop journalists or hip-hop activists who were familiar with the local communities. This ensured a heterogeneous sample of perspectives and personal narratives, whereby interviewees were not always born and raised in the respective cities but rather contributed actively towards the hip-hop art form in their community during the time of investigation.

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[124] Schensul, Stephen L, Jean J Schensul, and Margaret Diane LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 1999), p. 149.

[125] Cf. Ibid.

[126] The transcriptions incorporated in this thesis have been amended from their verbatim original for the sake of grammatical clarity and readability.

In both local hip-hop communities there remained, however, the same challenge, and ultimately impossibility, to attain contact with graffiti artists who solely pursued illegal graffiti art. The graffiti artists who thus shared their insights in this study have, for the most part, left their illegal activity behind and now pursue graffiti art commercially or teach it as a legitimate art form. Nevertheless, graffiti art's illegal form of expression does appear in the form of close readings of visual documentations, which will be discussed in the following section.

1.4.4 Close Readings of Hip-Hop's Cultural Texts

Originally, the method of close reading was applied to literary texts, where words and sentences became critically read with 'depth, precision, acuity, and patience.'[127] While this study follows the same critical approach, it also applies close readings to cultural texts which are created without the written word. These include musical, choreographed, lyrical and typographic texts, which were derived from two sources. On the one hand, they comprise photographs that capture moments of hip-hop's expression and performance in the field. On the other hand, they consist of photographs, as well as video clips and songs published on the Internet or on CD. To ensure an adequate analysis of the four different cultural texts comprising hip-hop's art forms, four individually tailored methods have been chosen to guide the close readings.

Close readings of hip-hop music created through DJing and music production are framed by Serge Lacasse's approach to sampled musical texts.[128] Influenced by Gerard Genette's understanding of *intertextuality*, Lacasse distinguishes between *autosonic* and *allosonic* quotations as intertextual devices.[129] The former relates to the act of taking an extract of one recorded text and putting it into another. The latter quotation, on the other hand, refers to a text passage that has been distinctly altered compared to its original, such as through a live improvisation based on a citation by another instrument or musician. This method therefore allows the researcher to identify the intertextual composition of hip-hop music and to discover the systematic construction of cultural meaning by re-working cultural memory into present musical texts.

The challenge that lies in this particular method, however, is the risk of the recipient not sharing the same cultural codes transmitted by the producer and hence not

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[127] DuBois, Andrew, 'Close Reading: An Introduction', in Lentricchia, Frank, and Andrew DuBois, eds., *Close Reading: The Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 1-40 (p. 4).

[128] Cf. Lacasse, Serge, 'Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Music', in Talbot, Michael, ed., *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 35-58.

[129] Ibid., p. 38.

comprehending the intertextual references. As Lothar Mikos points out: 'Intertextualität ist daher ein Moment des Kommunikationsprozesses zwischen Autor/Produzent und Hörer/Rezipient'[130] and is furthermore 'auf der Rezeptionsseite bestimmt durch alle Texte, die die Hörer an einen HipHop-Track herantragen, sowohl ihr Wissen um HipHop-Tracks als auch ihre Erwartungen an HipHop-Tracks. Intertextualität kann also nur relativ bestimmt werden.'[131] This study has therefore filled any referential gaps with the knowledge and information gained through interviewing the DJs and producers who feature in this thesis. The same approach applies with regards to the remaining three art forms and the close readings of their cultural texts.

In order to discover registers of meaning in hip-hop dance, close readings will highlight five choreographic categories derived by dance theorist and historian Susan Leigh Foster.[132] The first category, the *frame,* highlights the way a dance performance is presented in contrast to other worldly events. S*tyle,* on the other hand, provides the dance with a unique position and identity within its genre and places its artistic expression into a social and historical context. The *vocabulary* refers to the names of individual steps that construct the dance performance. The rules that regulate the choice and sequencing of the steps are referred to as the *syntax*.[133] Finally, the last choreographic category is the dance's *mode of representation,* which explains the way the dance refers to its surrounding world. By distinguishing between these choreographic aspects, the aim is to understand the ways hip-hop dance enables local artists to express their identity, as well as to show if and how hip-hop dance becomes significant as a German cultural practice.

Rap lyrics will be analysed according to the four main categories of rap's oral features as defined by linguists Androutsopoulos and Scholz.[134] The first category comprises *song themes* and refers to the topics of the rapped messages. The second category focusses on *ritualised speech acts* that commonly appear in rapped messages, including the popular act of representing one's place of belonging. Thirdly, the category of *rap specific rhetoric* concerns the use of metaphors, simile, or cultural references, while *linguistic orientation* comprises the final category in which rap lyrics are identified by

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130 Mikos, Lothar, 'Interpolation and Sampling: kulturelles Gedächtnis und Intertextualität im HipHop', in Androutsopoulos, ed., *HipHop: Globale Kultur – Lokale Praktiken*, pp. 64-84 (p. 72).

131 Ibid., p. 73.

132 Cf. Foster, Susan Leigh, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), p. 59.

133 Ibid.

134 Cf. Androutsopoulos, Jannis, 'HipHop und Sprache: Vertikale Intertextualität und die drei Sphären der Popkultur', in Androutsopoulos, ed., *HipHop – Globale Kultur*, pp. 111-36 (p. 116).

their linguistic properties. These four categories therefore serve to locate rap's re-functioned signification in a cultural as well as linguistic context pertaining to Germany.

Lastly, graffiti art is close read according to its typographic attributes. These are based on linguist Hartmut Stoeckl's definition of four main typographic categories.[135] The first is called *microtypography* and refers to the formal structures of letters and symbols, such as font, style, colour or size. *Mesotypography* subsequently refers to the composition of a text as it appears on a given surface. With the addition of more detail to a text, *macrotypography* relates to the organisation of textual units including visual accents, such as images, figures and caricatures. In order for all these typographic aspects to become relevant and identifiable as belonging to the graffiti art movement, the last category of *paratypography* is the final focus for close reading graffiti art. Stoeckl divides *paratypography* into the materiality of a text in terms of the tools employed to create it and the surface structure on which it is placed.[136] Graffiti art is therefore primarily identified through its creation with aerosol spray paint and its positioning on a wall. Together, these main typographic categories allow one to decode the graffiti writers' messages as well as their stylistic meaning and function within German cityspaces.

While each method of close reading has been briefly explained in this section, it remains to be said that a more in-depth outline of each individual approach will be provided in the respective chapter. The format of each chapter and the overall structure of the thesis will be presented in the following and final part of this introduction.

1.5 Chapter Overview

Each chapter is dedicated to one of hip-hop's main art forms, beginning with music, followed by dance, rap and graffiti art. All four chapters adhere to the same structure by which a spatial, historical and social overview of each art form's emergence in the United States is followed by an outline of the chosen method for close reading the specific hip-hop element in the respective German case study. This will be succeeded by a brief introduction on the ways in which hip-hop was initially practiced in West

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[135] Cf. Stoeckl, Hartmut, 'Typographie: Gewand und Körper des Textes – Linguistische Überlegungen zu typographischer Gestaltung', *Zeitschrift für angewandte Linguistik,* 41 (2004), 5-48 (p. 22).

[136] Cf. Ibid., p. 37.

Germany,[137] serving as a basis on which to understand the contemporary social, historical and spatial discourses that frame the contemporary local manifestations of hip-hop. While the first two chapters on music and dance only comprise analyses pertaining to Hamburg, the last two chapters on rap and graffiti art comprise a comparative study of their manifestations in Hamburg *and* in Oldenburg.

The first chapter looks at the ways in which hip-hop's musical tradition has been adapted and developed in Hamburg. As early Hamburg hip-hop music formed part of the former 'Britcore' scene, this chapter reveals how, from the onset, Hamburg's hip-hop culture has been influenced by cultures other than its US-American original. This has affected the sound of local German hip-hop music as well, with examples by Absolute Beginner and Rattos Locos showing how local artists have engaged in their city's culture and image in order to create their individualistic hip-hop music as an expression of their German identity. This aspect will also be investigated in terms of live DJing, with examples presenting how German DJs have engaged in the performative art of turntabling. An in-depth close reading of a video clip performance by Das DJ Orchester will provide detailed insights into the spatial and social strategies with which three German hip-hop DJs present themselves as professional musicians who create live musical experiences in Germany by mixing different performance practices into one hip-hop 'concert.'

The second chapter examines the ways in which dancers in Hamburg have come to express their German identity through an engagement in hip-hop's dance forms. The influence of local b-boy SonnyTee in particular has made Hamburg's hip-hop dance community one of the most diverse in Germany. This chapter will therefore look at recent spatial, historical and social strategies with which local dancers and dance crews have adapted hip-hop's kinaesthetic element in order to represent their German city or nation. However, an exploration of the relationship between identity and hip-hop dance will also show that this art form struggles to be understood as a German art form and to be accepted as a constituted form of dance. A detailed close reading of a dance show performed in the city centre of Hamburg will reveal how local hip-hop dancers attempt to overcome this identity dilemma with regards to their own identity as German artists and to hip-hop dance.

The third chapter comprises the first comparative urban analysis of the thesis. The first part is dedicated to Hamburg and traces the development of rap from being practiced as an underground and private past-time into becoming subsequently commercialised

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[137] Both Hamburg and Oldenburg lie in what used to be West Germany. The history of hip-hop in the GDR can therefore be omitted for an analysis of the respective local hip-hop communities.

and pursued as a profession. Three examples of commercial rap acts comprising Fettes Brot, Rattos Locos and Samy Deluxe will provide different insights into the varying linguistic expressions and lyrical messages of German rap, especially in terms of their national identity discourses and their ability to communicate different representations of Germanness via different historical, spatial, social as well as linguistic discourses. The second part of the chapter will turn to Oldenburg, where rap began as the same indoor leisure practice as in Hamburg yet where it has since remained the same. With the majority of rappers being of ethnic German origin, this study will examine how and why this underground pursuit of rap resonates meaningfully as a cultural practice in a small German urban community. In line with this examination, this analysis will also include examples of rappers who have commercial aims and how they manage their marketing strategies[138] in order to be successful German rap artists from Oldenburg.

The final chapter is dedicated to analysing graffiti art and how it has become relevant as a contemporary German artistic practice. By looking at graffiti art on Hamburg's urban railway cars and city walls, the first part of the chapter highlights the ways in which political and social identity discourses are artistically expressed by local graffiti artists. Examples include OZ, DAIM and Tasek who all present different aesthetic and cultural approaches to their art form, despite appropriating the same material and spaces in the same city. Since the global influences of the Internet have further resulted in greater artistic exchange beyond urban borders, this chapter shows that graffiti art in Germany has become a multicultural form of expression, which does not, however, necessarily represent the cultural backgrounds of the artists. This becomes more evident in the second part of the chapter, which presents equally diverse examples of graffiti art and artists in Oldenburg, such as Indiz, Sbek and Moe. Despite working in smaller and hence very different spatial conditions, a look at Oldenburg's graffiti art community will show how hip-hop's visual element has become a thriving public art movement, as well as a form of communication and identity management for artists beyond big cities. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that the outdoor expressions of graffiti art in Germany has irreversibly come to frame the urban experiences of German cities as encounters of multiculturality, whether metropolitan or provincial.

Finally, a conclusion to this multi-sited hip-hop analysis will summarise the main findings and trends concerning contemporary identity formations in German hip-hop culture. Projected outcomes comprise a better understanding of what it means to be German in the twenty-first century for those who engage in hip-hop culture, of how hip-hop's four main art forms help negotiate, manage and communicate local belonging and how, in so doing, hip-hop can be understood as a German cultural practice. These

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[138] Cf. Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics,' pp. 199-208.

results present a perspective on German identity in which some ethnicities, mentalities and skin colours become a part of contemporary Germanness, while others do not. The former state is captured in the concept of 'post-hybridity'– a term that is introduced in this thesis to describe multicultural and at the same time German identity formations, which are particularly mobilised in hip-hop culture.

2 Hip-Hop Music

2.1 The Backbone of Hip-Hop Culture: The DJ

> Hip hop began explicitly as dance music to be appreciated through movement, not merely listening. It was originally designed for live performance, where one could admire the dexterity of the DJ.[139]

These live performances, as outlined by Richard Shusterman, specifically unfolded in the New York City borough of the Bronx. Indeed, the Bronx has been most commonly cited as the birthplace of hip-hop music and hence of hip-hop culture in the year of 1973.[140] At the time, the Bronx' 'thirdspace' experience was defined by financial instability, ethnic segregation and social marginality,[141] with Forman emphasising that 'nowhere was the human damage and social devastation of late 1970s and early 1980s America more evident than in the city's uptown boroughs where the hip-hop phenomenon originated.'[142]

This social devastation also reflected on the Bronx' urban 'firstspaces,' which comprised 'rumbling highways and crumbling schools, towering apartment buildings and teeming playgrounds'.[143] Yet, within these 'firstspaces' Mark Katz also emphasises that due to the cultural and ethnic amalgamation of African-American, Carribean and Latino heritages there existed 'funk godfathers, soul queens, and disco DJs; street corner *salseros* and Jamaican sound system makers'.[144] In other words, despite the bleak urban circumstances of the Bronx it was also an arena for experiencing culturally rich and positive energies in the form of music and dance. Katz asserts that by encountering the Bronx from this perspective many of 'the early hip-hop DJs felt genuine affection for their city, taking deep pride in being a Bronxite rather than protesting its harsh conditions.'[145] In fostering this pride, DJs began to engage in this local 'thirdspace' experience by employing their musical knowledge of the Jamaican sound systems[146] in order to create live urban musical performances.

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[139] Shusterman, Richard, *Performing Live – Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 63.
[140] Cf. Rose, p. 30; cf. Katz, *Groove Music – The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 17.
[141] Cf. *Scratch*, Doug Pray, dir., Afrika Bambaataa, Mos Def, and Fab 5 Freddy, perf. (Palm Pictures, 2001), DVD.
[142] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 87.
[143] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 42.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid., p. 40.
[146] Katz explains that these sound systems were 'often homemade assemblages of turntables, amplifiers, speakers, and miles of cable. And they were enormous – some systems had as many as fifty speakers.' Cf. Ibid., p. 26.

The first DJs to do so were African-American DJs Grandmaster Flash and DJ Afrika 'Bam' Bambaataa, as well as Jamaican DJ Kool Herc. Known as 'the "holy trinity" of hip-hop culture, as the three pioneers who laid hip-hop's foundation,'[147] the three DJs started hosting local open-air events. These became known as 'block parties,' firmly linking this party movement to its 'firstspace,' i.e. to the architectonics of the neighbourhood block. In so doing, DJs engaged in spatial discourses by, on the one hand, converting an urban space into a Goffmanian 'front,' and on the other hand, by demarcating *their* territory within the wider cityspace. Thus, local DJ Grandmaster Flash remembers that

> Kool Herc had the West Side, Bam had Bronx River. DJ Breakout had way uptown past Gun Hill. Myself, my area was like 138th Street, Cypress Avenue, up to Gun Hill, so that we all had our territories and we all had to respect each other.[148]

This respect was primarily negotiated through 'spatial praxis, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in a field of unevenly developed (spatial) power' (THSP: 31). The spatial power came in the form of sonic volume released by the DJ's sound system, for '[p]artygoers and passersby who heard – and felt – a sound system from afar were not just hearing music, they were witnessing a raw demonstration of the DJ's might and receiving a clear message: *you are entering my territory.*'[149] Yet, not only does Katz interpret the DJ's aural demarcations as important signals for his social 'audience' as well as for 'outsiders.' He further infers that 'the output of such extravagant volume can also be interpreted symbolically: both as a display of power and as a defence mechanism.'[150]

More specifically, this aural shield defended the constant traffic noise of engines and motors conjured up by the American Express Way – a highway complex built straight through the Bronx.[151] The sheer material factor of the highway cutting through the New York borough consequentially created a 'thirdspace' filled with constant sonic turbulence. Hence, for the 'pioneering hip-hop DJs, merely to exist in the Bronx was to experience near-constant noise.'[152] With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that the first hip-hop DJs not only absorbed the noise but worked against it and simultaneously

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147 Ibid., p. 51.
148 DJ Grandmaster Flash in Forman, Murray '"Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music', *Popular Music,* 19 (1), (2000), 65-90 (p. 66).
149 Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 36.
150 Ibid., p. 39.
151 Cf. Ibid., p. 38 and Rose, pp. 31-33.
152 Katz,*Groove Music,* p. 39.

'created it, and through their massive sound systems, they indelibly shaped the Bronx soundscape.'[153]

The musical sound in conjunction with the material conditions of the cityspace also influenced the establishment of a distinct musical aesthetic beyond the volume that was being played. Through the advent of specific technical inventions with which to play vinyl records, the DJ's focus shifted from negotiating respect via sonic and hence spatial power towards negotiating it through technical dexterity.[154] The most prominent of such technical inventions came in the form of the 'scratch' technique. Commonly acknowledged as having been accidentally invented by Bronx DJ Grandwizzard Theodore who manually moved a vinyl record back and forth, the scratch has become the most recognised aesthetic element of hip-hop music.[155]

Whilst primarily employed to scratch an additional rhythm pattern into a recorded sound, Katz connects this invention to the urban experience, namely 'as a celebration of the notoriously noisy city of the Bronx, for it transformed what could be considered sonic blight into music.'[156] In other words, even the emerging aesthetics and techniques that created hip-hop music were mobilised through the local 'thirdspace' experience, again highlighting the influence and relevance of spatiality on hip-hop music's development. In this context other aesthetic practices became invented by the 'trinity of hip-hop' at the neighbourhood block parties, as well:

> Herc set the cornerstone, a powerful, bass-heavy break beat; Bam, the Master of Records, supplied the bricks through his vast and eclectic selection of songs and sounds; and Flash [...] provided the mortar – the means of joining hip-hop's diverse sonic materials into a solid, unbroken structure.[157]

The break beat, or simply the 'break,' refers to a short percussion solo generally heard in funk music, although a break 'may show up anywhere in a song, and really, anywhere in music.'[158] Typically, there is an underlying 'funkiness' uniting these breaks, such as a syncopated rhythm pattern played by a small selection of instruments. This provides the break beat with a somewhat naked feeling in contrast to the full sonic force of the overall musical track.

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153 Ibid.
154 Cf. Ibid., p. 49.
155 Cf. *Scratch*, Doug Pray, dir. and cf. Katz, *Groove Music,* pp. 49-51. According to Grandwizzard Theodore, '[t]he scratch is something the Hip Hop world cannot live without.' Cf. Grandwizzard Theodore in Kugelberg, Johann, ed., *Born in the Bronx – A Visual Record of the Early Days of Hip Hop* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007), p. 202.
156 Katz, *Groove Music*, p. 66.
157 Ibid., p. 49.
158 Cf. Ibid.

In particular, break beats owe their cornerstone status to local dancers who performed 'their showiest moves during these percussive breaks.'[159] While originally composed as a short musical divergence within the main theme of the song, the newly-formed purpose of these breaks required an artificial musical extension in order to make the dancing last longer. This extension was created by Grandmaster Flash who 'developed more sophisticated ways of repeating breaks, using two copies of a record on two turntables and employing a mixer to switch quickly and seamlessly between the two discs.'[160] So-called 'looping' was born, which meant playing the same segment of a break over and over again – like a loop. From this invention onwards, Joe Schloss explains that the

> breakbeat focus of the Bronx deejays set in motion a number of social trends that would give birth to a music known as hip-hop. These included the development of a substantial body of knowledge about the nature and location of breakbeats, an oral tradition and culture to preserve this knowledge, a worldview that valorized the effort necessary to find breaks, and an aesthetic that took all of these concerns into account.[161]

This hip-hop music aesthetic eventually spread to other parts of the country, as well. New turntable techniques were most notably being invented by DJs in Philadelphia and on the West Coast of the United States.[162] However, these advances also disconnected the practice of DJing from being a lived dance experience in a public urban space. By the 1990s, hip-hop DJing branched into 'turntableism' which became a 'separate movement, independent from dancers and MCs. The music of these DJs was meant for listening, not dancing, for head-nodding, not rump-shaking.'[163] On the other hand, within this new movement, the turntable finally gained an identity of its own. It became considered an autonomous musical instrument, indeed a hybrid musical instrument, with the possibility to create new music by simultaneously *re*-producing previously recorded sounds.[164] The requirement of 'real-time manipulation'[165] through specific turntable techniques, such as 'backspinning, slip-cueing, punch phrasing, and, of course, scratching,'[166] further legitimised the turntable's musical instrument status beyond its initial purpose to create dance music in the blocks of the Bronx.

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[159] Ibid., p. 15.
[160] Ibid., p. 16.
[161] Schloss, Joseph, *Making Beats – The Art of Sample-based Hip-hop* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 32/3.
[162] Cf. *Scratch*, Doug Pray, dir. and cf. Katz, *Groove Music,* pp. 101-08.
[163] Katz, *Groove Music*, p. 127.
[164] Cf. Ibid., p. 62.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

A similar shift in terms of performative priorities took place when DJs re-located from the outdoor public space into an indoor music studio.[167] This new branch of DJing stopped engaging with a live 'audience' all together, which previously framed the DJs' 'thirdspace' experience as performers. Rather, DJs who started working in studios started calling themselves music producers and employed their musical skills for 'the creation of the instrumental tracks over which MCs rhyme.'[168] The contrast between making music in a performative 'front' versus in a private 'back' region is highlighted by German DJ Stylewarz who explains that

> beim Auflegen kriegst du halt relativ schnell ein Feedback. Viele Leute denken ‚Ja du legst halt auf und die Leute tanzen.' Aber [...] das [ist] so ein Geben und Nehmen. Und im Studio bist du in deiner kleinen eigenen Welt. Und fährst deinen Film. Bist am Basteln. Und dann schaust du halt irgendwie was du damit machst und ob eventuell andere Leute deinen Film nachvollziehen können.[169]

DJ Stylewarz' act of *'basteln'* refers to the creation of musical 'beats,' which can be understood as 'musical collages composed of brief segments of recorded sound.'[170] These segments can include a 'fraction of a waveform, a single note from an instrument or voice, a rhythm, a melody, a harmony, or an entire work or album'[171] and are individually referred to as 'samples.' The selected samples employed in music production are even frequently 'the same ones that DJs had been spinning for years.'[172] This aesthetic practice of composing musical collages from past sounds therefore still provides a historical bond and a sense of continuity to the original practice of DJing. It is here that hip-hop music's historicality becomes most apparent, since the aesthetic of sampling creates musical texts that fuse past sounds into a contemporary sonic mixture.

Hip-hop scholar Tricia Rose, in particular, relates this aesthetic of hip-hop music to an African-American cultural and historical discourse, whereby recognising samples 'affirms black musical history and locates these "past" sounds in the "present".'[173] Moreover, Rose writes that the 'distinctive, systematic use of rhythm and sound, especially the use of repetition and musical breaks, are part of a rich history of New World black tradition and practices.'[174] The turntable technique of looping break beats then, i.e. of repeating a segment of a song, is what Rose understands as being inherently

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[167] Cf. Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 79.
[168] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 62.
[169] DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 12 June 2012.
[170] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 2.
[171] Williams, Justin A, *Musical Borrowing in Hip-hop Music: Theoretical Frameworks and Case Studies* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 2009), p. 14.
[172] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 122.
[173] Rose, p. 89.
[174] Ibid., p. 64.

African – especially in contrast to classical European musical traditions. Basing her findings on James A Snare's studies on African music, Rose explains that 'European culture "secrets" repetition, categorizing it as a progression or regression, assigning accumulation and growth or stagnation to motion, whereas black cultures highlight the observance of repetition, perceiving it as circulation, equilibrium.'[175] The practice of looping is thus, according to Rose, 'repositioned as repetition, as equilibrium inside the rupture,'[176] – the rupture being the cutting of the break beat out of its entire song. Hence, Rose's conclusion is that the hip-hop DJs' technical invention 'uses repetition and rupture in new and complex ways, building on long-standing black cultural forces.'[177]

Schloss further supports this cultural-historical perspective of hip-hop music production practices by linking the aesthetic of sampling to the vernacular African-American tradition of 'signifying.'[178] Originally cultivated by black slaves in the United States, this tradition engaged in the potential ambiguity of words and sentence structures in order to re-contextualize language by extracting the supposed clearness and directness from utterances made by the 'white' authority.[179] The act of signifying thus turns language into a playful and clever 'semantic inversion and indirection, feigned simplicity, and covert parody.'[180] In terms of signifying's appearance and manifestation in hip-hop music productions, Schloss explains that by 'turning samples of single notes and linear musical phrases into cycles and using virtually all material in an ambiguous or double-voiced way, hip-hop can simultaneously "Africanize" material from any source and hide its African sensibility.'[181]

However, it remains problematic to ground all of hip-hop's musical structures and hence hybridisation processes in an African or African-American context, for 'only one group other than African Americans was involved from the very beginning – Latinos, particularly those of Puerto Rican heritage.'[182] According to Katz, this Latino influence appeared 'through the work of individual DJs and, more broadly, though the impact of Latin music.'[183] Katz elaborates on this aspect, stating that the 'Latin contribution is not just in the tinge – it's at the core'[184] of hip-hop music. This cultural contribution can be

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[175] Ibid., p. 69.
[176] Ibid., p. 70.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Cf. Schloss, *Making Beats*, pp. 196/7.
[179] Cf. Poschardt, Ulf, *DJ Culture* (Hamburg: Rogner und Bernhard GmbH & Co Verlags KG, 1995), p. 191.
[180] Shusterman, p. 62.
[181] Schloss, *Making Beats*, pp. 196/7.
[182] Katz, *Groove Music*, p. 27.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid, p. 32.

traced back to the 'thirdspace' perspective of the Bronx since hip-hop music's break beat tradition 'owes a great deal to the salsified soundscape of the Bronx.'[185]

It can, of course, also be argued that salsa was influenced by African instruments and traditions before it was 'exported' to the Bronx by the cultural heritages of its inhabitants. Yet, if this were the case, a clear distinction between African-American and Latino cultural heritages would not be made by hip-hop scholars, or by its practitioners. Jeff Ogbar rather concludes that the 'centrality of Puerto Ricans is ignored for the sake of the "black aesthetic,"'[186] which has manifested itself as a key racial discourse in hip-hop culture.[187] Aside from describing its musical aesthetic, the 'attribute' of blackness became an identity norm for the first hip-hop DJs in the Bronx, which simultaneously stigmatised other skin colours and ethnicities that did not reflect Africanness. Latino DJ Charlie Chase from the Bronx, for instance, claims that he 'encountered scepticism and prejudice'[188] at hip-hop parties due to his Latino heritage: '[d]ancers at his first gigs were sometimes shocked to see that the DJ who emerged from the shadows was Puerto Rican, not black, and early on he was frequently harassed at parties by security who assumed he didn't belong.'[189] Similarly, local Puerto Rican DJ Disco Wiz was confronted by fellow Latinos asking: '"You're trying to be black, you hanging out with black people?" [...] "Stick to your kind, you disgrace."'[190] These statements thus touch upon the cultural expectation of the 'stigmatised' individual to remain loyal to his 'tribe.' The Latino and African-American inhabitants therefore saw themselves as individual cultural entities

> who have a common history and culture (and often a common national origin), who transmit their membership along lineage lines, who are in a position to demand signs of loyalty from some of the members, and who are in a relatively disadvantaged position in society (STGM: 145).

This loyalty was evidently negotiated through skin colour, where 'blackness' signified an inherent segregation within the Bronx's racial minority community despite sharing the same cityspace. However, since 'attributes' are always subject to social constructions of reality, it needs to be said that the signifier of black skin remains an arbitrary cultural sign of Africanness. This is best highlighted by black New Yorkean DJ Rob Swift who states: 'I'm Spanish. My parents are from Colombia.'[191]

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185 Ibid.
186 Ogbar, Jeffrey O G, *Hip-Hop Revolution – The Culture and Politics of Rap* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2007), p. 44.
187 Cf. Rivera, pp. 79-97.
188 Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 28.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid.
191 DJ Rob Swift in *Scratch*, Doug Pray, dir.

From these discordant socio-racial discourses taking place in the lived urban space of the Bronx, the development of DJing in other cityspaces not only contributed to the advancement of turntableism and studio production practices but also changed the need to have certain racial 'attributes' in order to be an authentic hip-hop DJ. The establishment of turntableism as an independent art form has, for example, been indebted to 'the rise of a Filipino American turntableist scene [and] must be recognized as one of the key developments in the history of the hip-hop DJ.'[192] Moreover, Canadian DJ A-Trak even emphasises the established integration of races and ethnicities in hip-hop DJ culture, stating that today's 'DJs come from all backgrounds. It's not like the rap scene which is predominantly black, and where you constantly hear about white MCs having to prove themselves. It's really great, actually, how multicultural DJing is.'[193]

Thus, as an interim summary, this section has served to trace the aspects of spatiality, historicality and sociality that have formed and defined hip-hop's musical element. As the 'firstspace' of the Bronx in the 1970s comprised disintegrating buildings which were predominantly inhabited by African-American and Latino residents, the constant sound of traffic as well as the open-air lifestyle created a noisy yet lively 'thirdspace' experience. Engaging in this urban condition, hip-hop DJs re-appropriated their neighbourhood blocks as 'firstspatial fronts,' namely as the material areas on which to perform their block parties. Whilst their status and respect as DJs was negotiated according to territorial boundaries and sonic volume, their musical creations and performances also served to maintain a cultural bond and historical continuity with the cultural narratives of their urban community. This has been most notably achieved through the practice of sampling, namely by relying on previous cultural knowledge of musical pieces in order to create a musical experience in the present.

Lastly, it remains to be said that sampling is also able to hybridise musical texts as the '*referenced* version takes on *alternative lives and alternative meanings* in a fresh context.'[194] It is here where new histories may be composed, simultaneously creating new cultural meaning. Indeed, the cultural norms and performative practices of DJing have already expanded since leaving the original urban 'firstspace' of the Bronx. What was once deemed a post-industrial, urban enunciation of 'blackness' has become a musical expression for artists pertaining to other spatial, historical and social contexts. Therefore, even though studies suggest that hip-hop's musical aesthetic especially 'resonates with black cultural priorities in the age of digital reproduction,'[195] other hip-

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[192] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 137.
[193] DJ A-Trak in ibid. A-Trak's statement concerning the racial composition of hip-hop's lyrical element will be further explored in chapter 4.
[194] Rose, p. 90.
[195] Ibid., p. 75.

hop scholars such as Tony Mitchell oppose this view by stating that contemporary hip-hop culture 'cannot be viewed simply as an expression of Afro American culture; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world.'[196] This local identity nevertheless remains expressed through hip-hop music's aesthetics and the practice of 'citation, of the relentless sampling of sonic and verbal archives.'[197] In order to capture this aesthetic, the following section will turn to intertextual theory with which to offer a close reading of hip-hop music's contemporary texts and to detect its hybrid musical meanings and messages in a German cultural context.

2.2 Reading the Intertextual Aesthetic of Hip-Hop Music

In 'Intertextuality and Hypertextuality in Recorded Music,' Serge Lacasse adapts Gerard Genette's theory of *transtextuality* and applies it to popular musical texts that specifically make use of the sampling technique.[198] As explained in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* Genette employs the all-encompassing term *transtextuality* when referring to 'all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.'[199] *Intertextuality* is therefore understood as a subcategory of *transtextuality* and used to 'identify a relation of copresence between two texts or among several texts; that is to say eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another.'[200]

Genette refers to the most direct intertextual practice as the act of *quoting,*[201] yet also mentions *allusions* as a paradigm for *intertextuality* defining these as 'an enunciation whose full meaning presupposes the perception of a relationship between it and another text, to which it necessarily refers by some inflections that would otherwise remain unintelligible.'[202] These acts of *intertextuality* are captured by Lacasse through the simultaneous reworking of Nelson Goodman's understanding of *allographic* and

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196 Mitchell, Tony, ed., *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-hop outside the USA* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), pp. 1/2.
197 Potter, Russell A, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1995), p. 53.
198 Cf. Lacasse, pp. 35-58.
199 Genette, Gerard, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* Newman, Channa, and Claude Doubinsky, transl. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 1.
200 Ibid., pp. 1/2.
201 Cf. Ibid., p. 2.
202 Ibid.

autographic art forms.[203] In so doing, Lacasse defines the two main intertextual categories found in sampled popular music as *autosonic* and *allosonic* quotations.[204]

The former quotation is 'characterised by the actual insertion of an excerpt from a given text within another.'[205] In musical terms, an *autosonic* quotation is therefore 'intimately linked with recording techniques.'[206] This quotation can be simply understood as the re-playing of a part of an already recorded track. Lacasse also mentions exceptions to this rule, such as *allosonic* quotations, which may want to sound *autosonic*. This happens when a producer attempts to mimic the original music as if it were directly taken from the live recording.[207] However, *autosonic* quotations are generally slightly re-adjusted through accelerations or diminuendos, or modified with a reverb, echo or looping, for example.[208] The *allosonic* quotation, on the other hand, refers to a quoted text passage that has been distinctly altered compared to its original. This can be achieved through a live improvisation of the citation or through being performed by another instrument or musician. Hence, in an *allosonic* quotation 'the shared bit between original text and intertext is abstract'[209] and is 'not typical for recording techniques.'[210]

The purpose of employing *allosonic* and *autosonic* quotations in hip-hop music is, according to Rose, 'about paying homage, an invocation of another's voice to help you say what you want to say. It is also a means of archival research, a process of musical and cultural archeology.'[211] This archival research connects to Katz's aforementioned pursuit of previous musical pieces known as the act of 'digging in the crates,' i.e. searching for unknown break beats and samples on vinyl records stashed in crates. Therefore, Rose further argues that musical samples function 'as a challenge to know these sounds, to make connections between the lyrical and musical texts.'[212] From this perspective, the dual distinction between *autosonic* and *allosonic* quotations within the sampled musical text also reveals the location and appearance of cultural hybridisation. While Papastergiadis notes that the creation of cultural hybridity and identity, 'involves the performance of two tasks simultaneously: it requires memory and experience,'[213] the intertextual understanding of sampling seems to do just that: it activates memory

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[203] Cf. Goodman, Nelson, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), pp. 112-15.
[204] Lacasse, p. 38.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Cf. Ibid., p. 40.
[208] Ibid., p. 39.
[209] Ibid., p. 38.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Rose, p. 79.
[212] Ibid., p. 89.
[213] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 98.

and creats an experience in the present which bridges differences between one's own cultural traditions and the ones introduced through African-derived musical aesthetics.

Yet, as the practice of sampling not only employs musical segments but any type of media deriving from television, cartoons, films or computer games, as well as random sounds that may comprise the DJ's social space and cultural knowledge, it should also be mentioned that not all intertextual quotations need to be culturally meaningful. German producer Sleepwalker explains that 'alles was summt und brummt ist Inspirationsquelle für einen Musiker.'[214] Similarly, German DJ and producer Mirko Machine emphasises the infinity of sounds that can serve as samples, explaining that

> [i]ch sample einfach auch alles. So. Aber es gibt genug! Das ist ja auch einfach das Gute im Hip-Hop. Man kann ja einfach alles samplen! So, ne? Wenn das Glas jetzt runterfällt, ich habe das cool aufgenommen gerade mit einem Mikrofon irgendwie *(laughs)* und finde das klingt cool und ich schneide das noch mal und setz das neu und dann kann ich auch daraus einen Beat machen.[215]

These statements therefore contradict Rose's aforementioned conclusion that relates sampling to a black cultural priority. They also problematise Steffen Lepa's and Malte Pelleter's findings who state that hip-hop beats are 'nie ‚l'art pour l'art', sondern müssen immer auch ihre soziale und kulturelle Funktion im Sinne von Bedeutungsstrukturen und Fixpunkten der HipHop-Kultur erfüllen.'[216] Rather, as Peter Manuel claims, the postmodern 'combination of elements from disparate discourses'[217] such as hip-hop music's 'sampled passages [often] function as simulacra, as free-floating signifiers to be enjoyed for their very meaninglessness, their obvious artificiality, in a characteristically postmodern exhilaration of surfaces.'[218] Researching sampled music can therefore entail exploring a fine line between locating signification in a text and dismissing it as being intentionally irrelevant. With this in mind, the next section will turn to hip-hop music's practices and performances in Germany by providing a brief overview of hip-hop music's establishment as a musical movement in West Germany followed by an analysis of its present manifestation in Hamburg.

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[214] Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.
[215] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
[216] Lepa, Steffen, and Malte Pelleter, '"Sampling" als kulturelle Praxis des HipHop', in Bock, Meier, and Süss, eds., *HipHop Meets Academia,* pp. 199-213 (p. 209).
[217] Manuel, Peter, 'Music as Symbol, Music as Simulacrum: Postmodern, Pre-modern, and Modern Aesthetics in Subcultural Popular Musics', *Popular Music,* 14 (2), (1995), 227-39 (p. 233).
[218] Ibid.

2.3 The Establishment of Hip-Hop Music in West Germany

> 'Der einzige Unterschied ist: er wohnt in New York, ist schwarz und ich wohne in Deutschland und bin weiß. Das ist der *einzige* Unterschied. Und wenn wir auf *Knowledge* kommen mach ich ihn nass, weil er nämlich *nix* weiß, außer, dass er da wohnt!'[219]

Mirko Machine's dismissal of the supposed racial and spatial superiority of a black DJ from New York City already captures the altered dynamics of hip-hop's musical element since its adaptation to other social, historical and spatial contexts. While the identity norm of the 'black aesthetic' has been invalidated, the cityspace of New York has equally lost its 'secondspatial' relevance of being the 'birthplace of hip-hop'.[220] Instead, Mirko Machine's statement implies that contemporary authentic hip-hop productions are not subject to a fixed discourse on race and place anymore but now rely solely on the 'substantial body of knowledge'[221] as previously mentioned by Schloss.

This knowledge, was transferred to West Germany a decade after hip-hop culture's emergence in the Bronx where hip-hop music became simultaneously introduced in the form of DJing and turntabling, as well as in the form of studio production. Initially, hip-hop music reached parts of West Germany through the presence of US-American soldiers stationed in Bremerhaven, Bremen and southern Germany. Here, hip-hop music was either played in designated dance clubs located in close proximity to US-American army bases,[222] or aired on the American Forces Network radio station (AFN) in its German broadcasting area.[223] Yet, more importantly, the main source through which hip-hop culture was introduced to the wider German audience consisted of US-American hip-hop films. These comprised Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style* (1983), Tony Silver's and Henry Chalfant's *Style Wars* (1983), as well as Stan Lathan's *Beat Street* (1984).

Frankfurt rapper D-Flame in particular recalls the impact of *Wild Style* explaining that '[w]ir haben das so angeguckt und ich so: „Alter! Ich will alles sein in dem Film! Egal, ob Graffiti-Writer, Rapper, bla bla bla." Weißt du? *(laughs)* Das war erst mal so weit entfernt, aber man hat die irgendwie so gefühlt!'[224] While fascinated by hip-hop's aesthetics, D-Flame's memory also sheds light on the fact that the socio-urban conditions of the Bronx, which nurtured this movement in the first place, became lost in the process of cinematic mediatisation. Without further insight into the spatial,

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[219] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
[220] Cf. Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 38.
[221] Schloss, *Making Beats,* pp. 32/3.
[222] Cf. DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 2 July 2012.
[223] Cf. DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 10 June 2012.
[224] D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.

historical and social dynamics that shaped hip-hop music, DJ Stylewarz explains that in West Germany, '[d]a hast du dir überhaupt gar keine Gedanken drüber gemacht *was* es ist, sondern wir waren einfach so sehr damit beschäftigt irgendwie *das* zu machen.'[225] This lack of contextual knowledge concerning hip-hop culture becomes even more apparent in D-Flame's reading of the 'tribal stigmata' on screen, whereby

> die Puerto Ricaner haben mich an meine damaligen türkischen Freunde sehr erinnert und die Schwarzen waren halt ich! Und ich habe das auch mit Türken zusammen geguckt, mit zwei Türken zusammen, und wir haben dann uns so gegenseitig angeguckt: ‚Krass! Die sehen ja sogar aus wie wir!' Weißt du so? *(laughs)* ‚Das sind wir!'[226]

While this statement by the German rapper who is of Cherokee-Jamaican and Polish descent reveals that the racial 'attributes' comprising the Bronx's hip-hop community resonated meaningfully as 'tribal stigmata' in Germany, it also reveals the ambivalence of these social signifiers when introduced into a different cultural context.

Without realising that hip-hop was about gaining a respected identity through creativity and innovation, early German DJs and producers rather engaged in hip-hop music as a mimetic cultural practice. Thus, their choice of samples echoed the same ones played by US-American DJs. [227] In other words, early West-German hip-hop music productions did not turn to the sounds of past German music with which to create a contemporary German hip-hop sound. The reason for this cultural disengagement is provided by Hamburg rapper and producer Samy Deluxe who explains that

> das Ding in Deutschland ist ja, dass wir ja nicht so eine wirkliche eigene Musikkultur haben, auf die wir irgendwie stolz zurückblicken können, wie wenn du in Amerika aufwächst und einfach weißt so: ‚Meine Eltern haben immer James Brown gehört und irgendwie das war unser Shit damals. Ich habe noch die *childhood memories*, wie die im Wohnzimmer dazu tanzen und dann sample ich das mal.' Dann hat es natürlich einen ganz anderen Bezug, als wenn ich jetzt sage: ‚Oh, den kenne ich auch James Brown, seitdem ich ein Kind war, aber Samples...' Und wir haben ja gar nicht das deutsche Pendant dazu. [...] In Frankreich ist [es] auch viel mehr, weißt du? Wenn du da lebst, dann hast du irgendwie direkt die Chansons mit denen du aufgewachsen bist.[228] Die liebst *du*, die lieben deine Eltern, die lieben die weißen Leute, die lieben die schwarzen Leute.[229]

By explaining this cultural dilemma, Samy Deluxe engages in Rose's aforementioned historical perspective of sampling, which functions as a memory discourse: only a

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[225] DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 10 June 2012.
[226] D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.
[227] Cf. Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.
[228] For further information on the relationship between chansons and French rap culture see Güngör, Murat, 'Politisches Chanson und Rap', in Güngör, Murat and Hannes Loh, *Fear of a Kanak Planet: HipHop zwischen Weltkultur und Nazi-Rap* (Höfen: Hannibal, 2002), pp. 43-46.
[229] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.

personal memory of a particular song or artist is able to authenticate its use as a sample. Samy Deluxe specifically locates these memories within a 'thirdspace' experience, such as dancing to the song in the living room, and hence consuming the music in a lived social space. This importance of 'living the sounds' is not only subject to the African-American inhabitants of the Bronx who listened to James Brown. It is also iterated in his example of France, insinuating that only by *living* in France can one experience and develop a full appreciation for French chansons which even have a uniting effect across generations and different racial backgrounds. Yet, if according to Samy Deluxe, German youth did not have any proud memory of experiencing music that was sung in the German language, there was little possibility to create authentic German hip-hop music via the practice of sampling. Instead, the only German music that seemed most compelling for sampling at that time was found in the GDR with Samy Deluxe adding that his fellow rap colleague Dendemann 'hat mir damals mal so geile Funkmusikplatten aus dem Osten gezeigt, also aus der DDR richtig.'[230] The GDR was thus understood as being just as culturally foreign as funk music, with neither of them resonating with West German familiarity.

Indeed, it was not until the unification of Germany that the conscious transition from the production of music to the production of *meaning* through music happened.[231] In Hamburg, this transition occurred in the 1990s in a process particular to its urban spatial logics and cultural nuances. It is this cultural shift which will be explored in the following analysis, highlighting the ways and strategies with which Hamburg's contemporary DJs and music producers create hip-hop music as a meaningful German musical movement.

2.4 Hamburg and the German Hip-Hop Sound

While hip-hop music was introduced via the aforementioned US-American films, Hamburg's early hip-hop music productions and turntabling practices were also highly influenced by the music's establishment as a 'hard core' genre in London.[232] Known as 'Britcore,' Hamburg music producer Sleepwalker even describes his early local hip-hop community as having been

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[230] Ibid. Torch, member of hip-hop trio Advanced Chemistry from Heidelberg, also emphasised the plethora of useful music found in the GDR for sampling purposes during this interview.

[231] Cf. DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 10 June 2012.

[232] Cf. Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012; cf. Gizmo, interviewed by author, 17 July 2012; cf. DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012; cf. DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author 10 June; cf. Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012; cf. Tim Beam, interviewed by author, 8 August 2012.

> ein Teil dieser Britcoreszene. Ich hatte erst so eine Band, die hieß erst 53,3 Extreme, so wegen Breitengrad Hamburgs. Und später hießen wir dann Readykill und [sind] dann auch mit Stylewarz[233] zusammen ab '91 [...] auf Tour gewesen und so. Da hieß er No Remorze und wir hießen Readykill so, weißt du? Und wir haben ganz viel zusammen gemacht.[234]

Forming an extention of Britcore's outreach in Germany, Sleepwalker's hip-hop group symbolised their local allegiance to Hamburg by geographically mapping their northern German location as a 'secondspace.' Their choice of English names, on the other hand, alluded to the deviant and aggressive sound that defined Britcore, since 'der härteste Rap, den es eigentlich gab, kam aus London.'[235] Hamburg DJ Ben Kenobi's location of 'hard' rap further highlights the ambivalence of cultural difference by disregarding the fact that hip-hop music's sound was supposedly a direct echo of the stigmatised experience of the US-American post-industrial city, which, according to Ogbar 'gave hip-hop its force and character'.[236] Instead, Britcore was a reflection of an anarchistic political movement musically expressed through a fast tempo and a sound described by DJ Ben Kenobi as 'schon so angepunkt fast.'[237] Nevertheless, the technique with which the 'punky' sound was created continued to follow the aesthetic of sampling, for Sleepwalker describes the 'Beats, die wir früher gemacht haben, die waren immer sehr Flow-lastig und die haben so gescheppert. Und das waren immer gesamplete Beatloops. Und die Engländer haben das auch gemacht, weißt du? Und die Amis haben schon angefangen Beats zu programmieren.'[238]

As Hamburg's hip-hop community was subject to this unique cultural influence deriving from Britain, the fact that it even engaged in this European musical co-operation has been particularly related to Hamburg's geographical location. DJ Ben Kenobi elaborates on this aspect by quoting local rapper Jan Delay, who rapped

> ‚der Hafen ist die Bassline', sozusagen. Ja ich glaub schon, dass das [der Hafen] eine Rolle spielt und ich glaube jetzt im Nachhinein ist es schade oder ist es gut, dass hier keine Amis stationiert waren. Also ich glaube für die Musik war es auf jeden Fall ausschlaggebend auch. Oder es hat sich auf jeden Fall widergespiegelt in der Musik, dass es nicht so amerikanisiert war. [...]

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233 At this point DJ Stylewarz was still living in Bremerhaven, the only other city together with Cologne to have shown interest in the Britcore genre. Cf. Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.

234 Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.

235 DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.

236 Ogbar, p. 41.

237 DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.

238 Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012. The fact that US-American producers were programming beats rather than sampling was influenced by copyright infringement laws which made sampling an illegal practice in the USA. Cf. Evans, Tonya M, 'Sampling, Looping and Mashing…Oh My!: How HipHop Music is Scratching more than the Surface of Copyright Law', *Fordham Intellectual Property, Media & Entertainment Law Journal*, 21 (2011), 843-904 (pp. 872-79).

> Natürlich haben wir Ami-Rap gehört, aber nicht nur. Wir waren da ein bisschen offener.[239]

In other words, the 'secondspace' of Hamburg's sea port which in Jan Delay's full rapped verse is moreover *'das Herz, die Bassline,'*[240] and the lack of US-American soldiers and their importation of US-American cultural products became the reason for why local hip-hop musicians were more open towards foreign musical sounds. Hip-hop journalist Gizmo further supports DJ Ben Kenobi's observation by adding that Hamburg is 'das Tor zur Welt'[241] which presents the German cityspace from a perspective that even dates beyond post-war Hamburg. Indeed, German historian Lars Ammenda explains that

> Hamburger entwickelten aufgrund der liberalen Traditionen und der geographischen Welt-Offenheit des Hafens eine besondere Bindung zur Stadt. Dies legt auch die erstaunliche Karriere des Schlagworts ‚Tor zur Welt' nahe, das als Synonym und werbewirksames Etikett für Hamburg in den heutigen Zeiten der Globalisierung wieder sehr häufig verwendet wird. Das Bild vom Tor wurde bereits Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts gelegentlich gewählt, um die räumliche Lage von Hafenstädten und Küsten zu beschreiben.[242]

This particular 'secondspace' identity and identification with Hamburg as a culturally open-minded city even became influential beyond the Britcore movement, since it was appropriated as a local sign for Hamburg's own hip-hop sound.

By 1998, Absolute Beginner, comprising rappers Jan Delay and Denyo as well as DJ Mad, released their album *Bambule.* The unique characteristic of this album is emphasised by D-Flame who claims that 'die [Absoluten Beginner] haben damals dann auch ganz woanders gesamplet.'[243] Thus, the use of different musical and hence cultural sounds reflect the city's worldliness and open-mindedness, which is influenced through its seaport. It is therefore no coincidence that *Bambule* begins its sonic narrative with a track called 'Das Boot,' treating Hamburg as a 'mental or ideational field, conceptualized in imagery, reflexive thought, and symbolic representation'[244] since the

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[239] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.
[240] Cf. Delay, Jan, 'City Blues', *Blast Action Heroes* (Buback/Motor, 2003), LP/CD.
[241] Gizmo, interviewed by author, 17 July 2012.
[242] Amenda, Lars, '„Welthafen" Hamburg – Kultur- und Technikgeschichtliche Perspektiven', in Wolfschmidt, Gudrun, ed., *Hamburgs Geschichte Einmal Anders: Entwicklung der Naturwissenschaften, Medizin und Technik* (Norderstedt: on Demand, 2009), [Nuncius Hamburgensis – Beiträge zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften, Bd. 7], pp. 238-49 (p. 243).
[243] D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012; samples in *Bambule* include French composer Pierre Bachelet's 'O' Et L'Amour a Trois' (1992) in the track 'Hammerhart,' while 'Nicht Allein' incorporates Cuban guitarist Silvio Rodriguez' song 'Debo Partirme en Dos' (1975). By remaining true to hip-hop's break beat tradition located in funk and soul songs, the track 'Füchse' samples from The Original's hit 'You're my Only World' (1974) while Shuggie Otis' song 'Aht Uh Me Hed' (1974) appears in the track 'Liebes Lied.'
[244] Soja, *Postmetropolis*, p. 11.

naming of this sea vessel immediately places the listener in a maritime 'secondspace.' Incidentally, the title also signifies a German identity without necessarily requiring knowledge of the German language as it iterates the internationally successful German war film titled *Das Boot* (1981).[245] While the song's aural introduction does not begin in a German war submarine, it does, however, situate the audience in a local river ferry by which 'der spezifische Sound der verwendeten Samples lokale Bezüge [herstellt].'[246]

The track starts with samples of bustling and beeping, and an *autosonic* quotation of the ferry captain's announcement: 'Nächste Station: St. Pauli-Landungsbrücken. Und da gibt's dann… Bambule.'[247] This sampled introduction connects the name of the hip-hop album to a socio-spatial discourse pertaining to Hamburg. While the term 'bambule' refers to an African-American prison protest tradition, it was also the name of a trailer park, and hence of a local 'firstspace' which at the time of the album's release was situated in the *Karolinenviertel* of the St. Pauli district[248] – a city district which borders with Hamburg's port, and hence with the 'gate to the world.'

By aurally reflecting this maritime and at the same time global German 'secondspace,' the hip-hop album not only employs samples from multiple cultural contexts but also makes use of German songs. D-Flame highlights this aspect by noting that 'das hat damals noch keiner gemacht, aber dann so deutsche Samples: „Dein Gesicht und mein Arsch könnten gute Freunde sein!" Weißt du? *(laughs)* Das war einfach geil! Wir so: „Eeeeey fett, Alter!"'[249] Aside from mentioning the innovative act of sampling from past German music, the equivocal act of cultural hybridity becomes evident, as well, since D-Flame refers to the hip-hop track 'Nie Nett' by actually citing a verse from German singer and songwriter Udo Lindenberg which appears in 'Ich bin beim Bund' (1983):

Der Spieß pöbelt rum, wie die letzte Sau.

Der hat bestimmt Komplexe oder Trouble mit seiner Frau.

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[245] The German feature-length film *Das Boot* had a further social impact on Germany and its image abroad as it re-formed the threatening perspective of German war submarines into humane items by providing insights into the feelings and fears of the young male crew operating the vessel. Cf. Hadley, Michael L, *Count Not the Dead: The Popular Image of the German Submarine* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1995), pp. 4/5.

[246] Lepa and Pelleter, p. 207.

[247] Absolute Beginner, 'Das Boot', *Bambule* (Buback/Universal Music GmbH, 1998), CD.

[248] *Bambule* was also the name of a German television film based on a script by later RAF terrorist Ulrike Meinhof which was aired in 1970. The film was briefly fashionable again in the 1990s with *Bambule* positively exploring the notion of solidarity as political action and hence as a precondition for the formation of an RAF collective identity. Cf. Colvin, Sarah, *Ulrike Meinhof and West German Terrorism: Language, Violence, and Identity* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), p. 75.

[249] D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012. 'Wir' refers to the Frankfurt hip-hop community. The personal and national impact of this hip-hop album was also mentioned by Stee, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012, DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author 3 July 2012, and by Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.

Schreit hier rum, so 'n beknacktes Schwein.

Ich sag': ‚Dein Gesicht und mein Arsch könnten gute Freunde sein.'[250]

Lindenberg's last verse has been extracted from its original lyrical stanza and looped four times as an *autosonic* quotation at the end of 'Nie Nett.' Re-appearing in this new German hip-hop context, Lindenberg's dismissive statement, which expresses his discontent of needing to return to the military barracks whilst serving as a soldier in the German Bundeswehr, is re-directed as a boastful insult to other German rappers who are supposedly listening to the song. Hence, while the dialectical play of the two German songs engages in the same semantic relationship, the playful product of hybridity also creates a local bond beyond its hip-hop aesthetic. While Lindenberg is not originally from Hamburg, he and his voice have been closely associated with Hamburg's music scene since the 1970s. The act of sampling him in a Hamburg hip-hop track therefore creates a historical continuity and a musical narrative located in the same 'spatiality.'

However, the reason for choosing Lindenberg as a sample is because, according to Jan Delay, Lindenberg is 'der größte lebende deutsche Poet. Er war der Grund, warum ich angefangen habe zu singen.'[251] Hence, despite Samy Deluxe's previous account of Germany's youth supposedly lacking an emotional connection to past German music, this case highlights an exception which was relevant for the authentic practice of sampling as an act of re-living personal memories. Samy Deluxe acknowledges this case by explaining that 'Jan, zum Beispiel, kannte immer solche Sachen, wie Udo Lindenberg. Ist damit richtig aufgewachsen und deshalb macht es auch total Sinn [ihn zu samplen]'.[252]

From *Bambule* onwards, hip-hop music's techniques gradually enabled the wider discovery and revival of Germany's musical past by hip-hop artists. Even beyond Lindenberg, Jan Delay also sampled songs by *Neue deutsche Welle* artist Nena,[253] while DJ Mirko Machine mentions that in his contemporary hip-hop productions 'Hildegard Knef ist gesamplet. Hier, Aphroe, ‚Kleiner Mann' ist Susanne [sic] Haas. Ja, Udo Lindenberg. Drums habe ich schon gesamplet.'[254] In so doing, previous German popular

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[250] Lindenberg, Udo und das Panikorcheser 'Ich bin beim Bund', *Odyssee* (Polydor, 1983), CD.

[251] Fuchs, Oliver, and Hannes Ross, 'Udo Lindenberg und Jan Delay: „Wir haben den Nasensound"', *Stern* (Stern.de, 28 March 2008) <http://www.stern.de/kultur/musik/udo-lindenberg-und-jan-delay-wir-haben-den-nasensound-615113.html> [accessed 12 April 2013]. This article also touches upon the fact that Lindenberg and Jan Delay have even performed together on stage.

[252] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.

[253] Cf. Delay, Jan, *Irgendwie, irgendwo, irgendwann* (EMI, 1999), single.

[254] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 20 May 2012; the singer's name is Sandra Haas.

music became consumable for these artists as it re-appeared in the guise of hip-hop which created

> 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of the past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent: it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present (LOC: 10).

Nevertheless, this 'in-between space' remained firmly grounded in a German cultural context for the newness of German hip-hop music became understood and accepted as a German cultural product. Samy Deluxe, for instance, highlights this seemingly self-contradicting development of German hip-hop music by stating: 'das erste, was ich auf Deutsch eben cool fand. [Es] waren eben die Jungs [Jan Delay and Torch] hier. So weißt du? Das war eben das erste, was für mich irgendwie Sinn gemacht hat.'[255] With German hip-hop representing the first viable form of consuming German popular music, Samy Deluxe's personal experience and hence history of German music thus begins with German hip-hop. It therefore comes as no surprise that in order for Samy Deluxe to engage in a historical discourse of German music, the timeline of his German samples only reaches back to the advent of German hip-hop music. While Jan Delay paid tribute to his role model Udo Lindenberg via the practice of sampling, Samy Deluxe engages in this aesthetic by paying tribute to his local idol Jan Delay. This becomes evident in Samy Deluxe's track 'Feuer, Verbrannt, Asche' (2012), in which the song title already alludes to Jan Delay's song 'Feuer' (2007).

While Samy Deluxe ironically re-appropriates the beat of 'Feuer' in order to boast about his rap skills, he repeatedly introduces *autosonic* references of Jan Delay yelling 'Au ja.' Samy Deluxe strategically employs this utterance as an act of *hypertextuality* where an identifiable segment of the earlier text, the *hypotext,* unites it with the *hypertext*, i.e. Samy Deluxe's adaptation of it.[256] In this case, the *autosonic* quotation of Jan Delay's expression is aurally distorted as it is additionally chopped into many echoing breaks. Samy Deluxe moreover engages in a *metatextual* practice, whereby a text is united with another 'of which it speaks without necessarily citing it.'[257] At the end, Samy Deluxe verbally and hence *allosonically* quotes Jan Delay's original verse '*denn das wichtigste ist, dass das Feuer nicht aufhört zu brennen*'[258] when rapping:

Denn eines, was ich von meinem Mentor gelernt hab',

Von dem ich mir den Beat hier geliehen hab',

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[255] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
[256] Cf. Genette, p. 5.
[257] Ibid., p. 4.
[258] Delay, Jan in 'Feuer', *Mercedes Dance* (Buback/Universal Music Group, 2007), CD.

Ohne, dass ich vorher das Sample geklärt hab',

Und ohne, dass ich grad ein Feature von ihm hab', ist,

Dass das Feuer nicht aufhört zu brennen.[259]

While this example of sampling therefore serves to show how Samy Deluxe's understanding of German musical history *begins* with hip-hop, it also highlights the establishment of a local and historical musical continuity within Hamburg. From a social perspective, this sampled narrative also hints at a multicultural development of Hamburg's hip-hop music when one considers that Samy Deluxe is an Afro-German music producer, who continues in the musical footsteps of ethnic German hip-hop artist Jan Delay, influenced by ethnic German singer and songwriter Udo Lindenberg.

Yet, the question remains whether the multicultural approaches towards creating new local German narratives as exemplified by Absolute Beginner and by Samy Deluxe have sufficed for a musical innovation, which not only Germanises an already established foreign musical technique and aesthetic, but which has also developed into a new hip-hop music-related genre. An answer to this question is provided during a conversation between Hamburg DJ Placeebo and D-Flame:

> D-Flame: ‚Ich würde mir dann doch ein bisschen mehr wünschen, dass wir ein bisschen mehr wie Frankreich und England noch ein bisschen *mehr* da auch unseren eigenen Scheiß so rausziehen. Weißt du? Weil ich meine Franzosen fangen jetzt auch wieder an eher Ami-Beats zu machen. Du merkst dann immer wieder, wo man sich das herholt, aber man zieht es sich von da und macht noch sein eigenes Ding dazu.'
>
> DJ Placeebo: ‚Aber die sind mutiger!'
>
> D-Flame: ‚Aber die Franzosen, wie gesagt, sind ein bisschen mutiger. Wobei ich fahre eher natürlich auf England ab, weil England –'
>
> DJ Placeebo: ‚Die Engländer sind auch mutiger! [...]'
>
> D-Flame: ‚Und seit Jahren machen die halt zum Beispiel Sachen, wie… weißt du, es gibt Reggae. Dann machen sie auf einmal Dub! Weißt du? Dann gibt's irgendwie Drum'n'Bass, dann machen die Engländer [...] Two Step. Dann gibt es auf einmal Dub Step! Weißte? Die mixen immer. Alle zwei Jahre kommt ein neuartiger Musikstil, der *auch* die Wurzel aufgreift, aber trotzdem was Neues. [...] So was hörst du dann halt auch in Amerika nicht. Und das fehlt noch ein bisschen in Deutschland.'[260]

D-Flame's observation on the way DJs and producers in England have created new sounds is clearly identifiable as the act of creating 'third spaces' where the mixing of musical styles and cultural influences enables new forms of music to emerge. While D-

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[259] Deluxe, Samy, 'Feuer, Verbrannt, Asche' (2012), freetrack, online.
[260] D-Flame and DJ Placeebo, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.

Flame and DJ Placeebo therefore conclude that the German producers are not bold enough in terms of innovation, which in itself is a very intriguing speculation, DJ Stylewarz claims that the creation of new musical genres is also the result of 'thirdspace' experiences framed by social encounters and cultural exchange. Just as the inhabitants of the Bronx fused their cultural sensibilities with material knowledge to create hip-hop music, so have the different cultures comprising the British as well as the French hip-hop communities created new musical styles, which are nevertheless still identified as being 'British' or 'French.' In contrast to this situation abroad, DJ Stylewarz interprets German hip-hop's stagnant musical state as being due to the fact that

> Deutschland relativ deutsch ist, so. Sieht in Frankreich schon wieder anders aus. Da hast du halt viele Afrikaner, noch mehr Araber und all das so. Das ist kulturell noch viel, viel größer. Und in Deutschland ist es nicht so. Oder in England zum Beispiel! Also was du da an Musik irgendwie hast. Du hast die ganzen Jamaikaner da. Und du kannst dem nicht entziehen! Also das wär eine Kunst das zu tun. Und das gibt es in Deutschland nicht. Das ist immer nur so Sparte mäßig. [...] Das heißt es mischt sich überhaupt nicht. Das hast du in Frankreich, also in allen Ländern um Deutschland herum, hast du das halt nicht so.[261]

In this case, DJ Stylewarz' critique echoes the contemporary German *Leitkultur* debate, in which the problem is not the existing multiculturalism in Germany but the lack of interaction and spatial connection between the cultures, since '[c]ultural exchange is the precondition of art.'[262] While DJ Stylewarz thus condemns Germany's supposed segregated cultural and musical state, claiming that the situation is different, indeed even better, in Britain and in France, a new hip-hop crew from Hamburg is attempting to create a local hip-hop sound.

'Rattos Locos Records,' founded by its manager Blacky White in 2008, fuse different cultural sounds in order to create their own musical identity, which, in turn, is deeply connected to the aforementioned 'secondspace' perspective of Hamburg. While the sea port has already been described as 'das Tor zur Welt' as well as the 'bassline' of Hamburg, Rattos Locos appropriate this urban symbolism by further emphasising the metaphorical multicultural-mindedness of Hamburg's past hanseatic pirates. Rattos Locos member Nate57, for example, explains that his beats entail

> karibische Einflüsse und auch brasilianische Kuduro-Einflüsse. [...] Sogar Grime-Einflüsse gibt es auch. Und Piraten sind halt die Segler. Die gehen halt um die Welt. Wir sammeln die schönsten Sachen auf und kreieren neuen

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[261] DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 10 June 2012. For further insights into France's adaptation of hip-hop music as a national form of artistic expression compared to Germany, see Güngör, '„l'école du micro d'argent" – Ein Blick auf die französische Szene', in Güngör and Loh, *Fear of a Kanak Planet,* pp. 41-52.

[262] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration,* p. 125.

> Sound! Jede Musikrichtung ist ja auch so entstanden aus anderen Musikrichtungen. Auch Reggae und so. Und wenn man es ja versucht eine eigene Identität zu machen, wird es halt doch ein anderer, eigener Sound. Wenn du dann dich daran setzt und sagst: ‚Ich will jetzt einen *Dirty South* Beat machen,' dann wird es halt auch ein *Dirty South* Beat, weil du dich daran auch hältst mit den High Hats und die Bass Drum so setzen. Und wir versuchen halt eine Mischung daraus zu machen und es klingt auch wirklich jetzt mittlerweile nach was ganz Neuem so. So U-Boot-Hamburg-mäßig.[263]

In his explanation, Nate57 captures the same submarine imagery previously employed by Absolute Beginner in the title 'Das Boot.' In this case, the war cruises of the German submarines attacking the enemy become synonymous with the sea raids of the hanseatic pirates. In so doing, the same social, spatial and historical discourse of the German maritime combat tradition becomes a metaphor for Hamburg's authoritative German hip-hop music. The most intriguing aspect of this musical hybridisation, however, is that the Afro-German or German-Pakistani artists who comprise Rattos Locos employ this strategy in order to represent their German identity. In other words, despite their innate hybridity, they mix cultural sounds in order to express their local German identity where, according to Papastergiadis, 'attention to its [the cultural exchange's] processes can not just register the transcendental signs of value or taste, but issue an inventory of the dynamics of change.'[264]

These dynamics of change thus reveal themselves in a state of post-hybridity in which the act of cultural mixing is supposed to affirm a local Germanness through cultural foreignness. Thus, Nate57, who is of Angolan origin where the music genre of kuduro originated, does not employ koduro as a cultural component and representation of his supposed 'tribal stigma.' Rather, in employing kuduro in its Latin American adaptation, the music genre distances itself from its original affiliation with African culture and is used as a musical ingredient, which represents Nate57's German affiliation pertaining to Hamburg's multicultural cityspace.

However, the success of Rattos Locos' new sound is dependent on other forces, as well. These forces comprise the commercial realm and the cultural industries. Mirko Machine, for example, emphasises German hip-hop music's marginalisation on the German air waves by contrasting this situation to 'die Franzosen. [Die] sind da einfach nicht so behindert, wie wir hier. So. Da gibt es einfach französische Musik *immer* schon im Radio.'[265] France's commercial protectionism and its rather exclusive attitude towards French music is therefore understood as a positive achievement by Mirko

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[263] Nate57, interviewed by author, 21 August 2012. Since the release of *Bambule* there has been a submarine installed as a tourist attraction at the local Fischmarkt in St. Pauli, again underlying the connection between this sea vessel and the image of Hamburg.
[264] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 125.
[265] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.

Machine, despite hip-hop music being celebrated for its necessary multicultural diversity of sounds. Gizmo even compares the musical output at dance clubs, claiming that

> dieser Push die eigene Mucke auch im Club zu spielen, so weißt du? Die fehlt noch [in Deutschland]. Frankreich spielen immer ihren eigenen Kram. In Frankreich ist ja auch das Gesetz, dass 70% muss national sein.[266] Klar, dass Hip-Hop dann auch permanent läuft.[267]

Indeed, DJ Ben Kenobi admits that 'im Club hab' ich eigentlich *nie* Deutschrap aufgelegt.'[268] Initially, the reason for this selection was that early German hip-hop beats were simply not 'fett und Club-tauglich, sag' ich mal.'[269] Recalling listening to a track by local hip-hop crew Dynamite Deluxe in the 1990s, DJ Ben Kenobi describes their sound as having been 'ein bisschen mau. Da fehlte halt irgendwie die Fettness. Die war noch nicht da.'[270] It seems as though the fat, booming beats of US-American hip-hop music, which were created in direct connection to their 'firstspace,' namely as an urban territory marker and as a statement of sonic resistance against highway traffic noise, were not translatable into a German context, where the cityspace did not provide such noise against which German DJs and producers had to react. The only instances in which DJ Ben Kenobi has played German hip-hop were as homages towards local artists: 'Natürlich hab' ich mal einen Samy-Deluxe-Track gespielt und auch einen Schnabel[271] Track, aber das, ne? Wenn du hundert Lieder spielst und davon sind drei Deutschrap-Dinger, das ist eigentlich sehr mager.'[272] In other words, playing German tracks did not aim at disseminating German hip-hop music to a wider audience but at cultivating internal structures and hierarchies within the local hip-hop community.

However, in this club context, the question arises whether the performative turntable element of DJing has become 'Germanised.' While this analysis has thus far explored German music productions, it needs to be considered whether the DJ tradition and turntable techniques have developed differently in Hamburg, despite the low amount of German hip-hop music productions being played at dance events. This assumption is sparked by the supposed differences between US-American and European turntable approaches, with Mirko Machine defining the former as

> so amerikanisch unsauber. Also bei den Amis war oft so ein Style, die haben die Nadel ungefähr da hingelegt, wo sie wissen wo sie hinmüssen und haben

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[266] The French air play law requires 60% of the music played on the radio to be European-based, of which 40% in turn need to be French, i.e. sung in the French language.
[267] Gizmo, interviewed by author, 17 July 2012.
[268] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Mister Schnabel is a former rapper from Hamburg.
[272] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.

> dann zwischendurch immer mal den Fader aufgemacht. Hier in Europa war man viel mehr darauf bedacht quasi das sauber zu machen und hat die Platten abgeklebt. So, dass du die Nadel *genau* an den Punkt setzen kannst, wo du hinmusst. Und [du] konntest auch einfach *im* Takt, auf jeden Fall in zwei Takten, eine Scheibe wechseln, wenn ein neuer Beat kommt.[273]

Without providing further reasons towards these different approaches to turntabling, DJ Ben Kenobi presents an insightful example of how European youth initially engaged in the 'foreign' art of turntableism. Prior to discovering the turntable as a musical instrument, the local hip-hop DJ was trained in classical percussion. The awareness of classical musical structures facilitated DJ Ben Kenobi's understanding of the drum heavy hip-hop music, which, according to Rose, reflects 'critical priorities in many African and Afrodiasporic musical practices.'[274] DJ Ben Kenobi explains that the insights gained through his training in classical music was 'für's DJing [...] natürlich top! [Eine] Art Taktgefühl und einen Auftakt und [beim] Sample die Länge zählen. Und deshalb ging das bei mir relativ schnell mit dem Mixen und dem Verständnis für den Beat. Und wann muss man wo wie rein.'[275] DJ Ben Kenobi's last remark refers to 'beat matching' which is a technique of switching smoothly between two different songs and is a valued skill since DJs need to 'count where the first beat drops on a bar or a measure. They must be able to listen to music of one tempo in one ear and then adjust another song until it is the right tempo in the other ear.'[276] Thus, local DJ Vito concludes that '[i]ch kenne keinen DJ, der besser beim Auflegen echte Remixe machen kann, dass manchmal Leute gedacht haben: „Oah, hast du das neue Lied gehört?" Der ist so *on point*! Ich kenne keinen, der das so gut kann wie er.'[277]

DJ Ben Kenobi not only perfected his turntable skills by combining knowledge of two disparate types of musical styles and cultural approaches. The fusion of classical music expertise and turntable technique has moreover resulted in a seemingly better ability to handle beats on a turntable and to create new musical 'texts,' indeed a 'third space' of music, as Papastergiadis notes that '[b]y mixing things that were previously kept apart there is both a stimulus for the emergence of something new, and also a shift in position that can offer a perspective for seeing newness as it emerges.'[278] In line with this classical approach towards hip-hop music, Samy Deluxe even proposes that 'man

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[273] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
[274] Rose, p. 66.
[275] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.
[276] Bakker, Hans, and Theo Bakker, 'The Club DJ: A Semiotic and Interactionalist Analysis', *Symbolic Interaction,* 29 (1), (2006), 71-82 (p. 72).
[277] DJ Vito, interviewed by author, 21 June 2012.
[278] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 57.

könnte natürlich unglaublich viele geile Klassikkomponisten aus Deutschland samplen!'[279]

Extending this idea of the 'classical' component within hip-hop DJing, Hamburg's 'DJ Orchester' have blended classical and hip-hop performance traditions while engaging in the African-derived musical aesthetics of turntabling. This orchestra consists of DJ 'Stylewarz, der einfach alles zercuttet hat, was überhaupt nur geht. Mixwell, der so technisch vollkommen überlegen ist. Ein Mensch, der hat ein unglaubliches Taktgefühl. [...] Und Mirko Machine.'[280] The distinct characteristics mentioned by DJ Vito highlight the individual styles and hence identities of the turntableists which confirms their skills and status as artists. Indeed, turntableist formations such as 'das DJ Orchester' only made sense 'when the DJ could be accepted as self-sufficient, no longer understood primarily as a supplier of music to MCs or dancers. In other words, turntableism was a necessary precondition for the existence of turntable bands.'[281]

With a band name that fuses a juxtaposing duality, Mirko Machine recalls that 'die Leute konnten einfach mit diesem Namen „DJ Orchester" nichts anfangen. So. Konnte sich keiner was drunter vorstellen.'[282] Incidentally, the name was not coined by the DJs themselves but by the owner of a local dance club in Hamburg who aimed to hire all three DJs 'wie so ein DJ Orchester.'[283] The local DJs thus engaged in this vision by blending the performance traditions of DJing with established stage practices at classical concerts. Mirko Machine, for instance, proposed that 'wenn wir so Orchester-mäßig uns so nennen, sollten wir uns auch einen Frack anziehen. Das wäre einfach fett!'[284] Hence, when performing as a DJ orchestra, the three turntableists' 'personal front' comprises white shirts, completed with bow ties and tailcoats, while formal trousers and shoes are, however, substituted with baggy jeans and trainers.

Furthermore, by visualising their name through the integration of symbolic codes on their 'personal fronts,' the three DJs' '"[a]ppearance" may be taken to refer to those stimuli which function at the time to tell us of the performer's social statutes' (PSEL:

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279 Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012. Indeed, Berlin-based rap and reggae artist Peter Fox sampled from Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich's *Symphony No.7* in C Major 'Leningrad' (1941) in his track 'Alles Neu' (2008). Consequently, London rapper Plan B entered #6 in the UK single after having sampled Peter Fox's beat in his own song 'Ill Manors' (2012). Cf. '2012 Top 40 Official Singles Chart UK Archive', *2012-04-07 Top 40 Official Singles Chart UK Archive* (The Official Charts Company, 7 April 2012) <http://www.officialcharts.com/archive-chart/_/1/2012-04-07/> [accessed 21 February 2013].

280 DJ Vito, interviewed by author, 21 June 2012.

281 Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 147.

282 Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.

283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.

24). In this case, the DJs' social statement addresses class rather than race, as all three musicians are of 'white' German ethnicity, while DJ Stylewarz is half US-American, as well. Das DJ Orchester therefore employs the *classy* dress code in order to signify, albeit playfully, an adherence to a higher social class than the one usually attributed to hip-hop artists, as they are often dismissed as self-sufficient, skilled musicians. This perception is triggered by being compensated less for their performance in contrast to DJs who play electronic music,[285] or by being frequently confronted with a 'DJ-as-jukebox' attitude by club audiences.[286] In order to accentuate this social recognition even further, the DJ orchestra re-frames the spatial characteristics of the dance club, as well.

During the DJ orchestra's performances, the 'firstspace' of the club architecture is re-structured according to a classical European performance 'setting.' A curtain devides the 'front' region between the 'audience' and the 'performer.' Das DJ Orchester appropriates the tradition of curtain openings and closures in order to signalise the beginning and end of their concert. Standing on an elevated stage facing the audience, the communal DJ orchestra's performance thus entails

> a team of persons whose activity on stage in conjunction with available props will constitute the scene from which the performed character's self will emerge, and another team, the audience, whose interpretive activity will be necessary for this emergence (PSEL: 253).

The available 'props' are in this case three turntables, while the interpretive activity of the audience, on the other hand, is influenced by the 'secondspace' identity of the location as a discothèque in which club norms are followed. Indeed, the DJs adapted these norms by beginning their concert 'um zwei [Uhr morgens] [...] und dann kommt ein Intro und dann geht der Vorhang auf und dann stehen wir da mit unserem *Stuff* und dann geht's los! Und dann rocken wir da auch reell so zusammen.'[287] The 'thirdspace' experience of their performance thus combines the expected danceable hip-hop sound with the classically-staged delivery as 'a simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency.'[288] In combining these two performance practices into a real-and-imagined experience, the DJ orchestra's hybrid approach to turntabling is furthermore enforced by playing fixed and improvised musical sequences at their concerts:

> Wir haben eine Routine am Anfang. Machen noch irgendwas und gehen in Partymode über. Spielen dann zusammen wirklich Platten. Jeder guckt so, was geht mit den Leuten. So und wenn die Leute gut drauf sind, kommt wieder

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[285] Cf. DJ Mixwell, interviewed by author, 19 June 2012.
[286] Cf. DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 10 June 2012.
[287] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
[288] Soja, *Postmetropolis,* p. 11.

> eine Routine. Und dann geht es wieder reihum und man spielt wieder ein bisschen Platten.[289]

On the one hand, the DJs engage in the original musical practice which caters to the audience's and hence to the dancers' requirements. On the other hand, performing set routines gives the turntableists an air of artistic seriousness, as these routines are carefully planned and practiced in advance. These preparations specifically unfold in a designated 'back' region, namely at 'unser Orchester Probenplatz'[290] which again highlights the DJ orchestra's professional construction of their performed self as they distinguish between the 'back region with its tools for shaping the body, and a front region with its fixed props' (PSEL: 253). Their *'Probenplatz'* is called the *Lab*, whereby 'lab' has been a common term to refer to the hip-hop DJ's practice room. Katz writes that DJ Steve Dee 'calls the Harlem apartment bedroom where he developed [beat juggling] his *lab'*.[291] This 'secondspace' label of the 'firstspace' functioned to emphasise the experimental innovation and artistry of this musical tradition, comparing it to a field of science.[292]

The DJ orchestra's *Lab* is located in an industrial building situated in Hamburg's *Schanzenviertel*. It is completed with 'tools' such as turntables, samplers, computers, vinyl records and other technical equipment required for practicing turntable skills and for producing beats. Other material such as posters on the walls and books in shelves decoratively represent hip-hop culture, as well. The outside architecture of the *Lab's* 'firstspace' edifice does, however, not identify it as a place pertaining to hip-hop's musical art form. Rather, it is the 'secondspace' identity of the Hamburg neighbourhood which resonates with hip-hop since it is known for its alternative, multicultural and artsy scene. Nevertheless, the three DJs experience hip-hop as a private and secluded practice in contrast to its open-air manifestation in New York City. With their *Lab* distanced from housing areas, the local DJs are able to play in full sonic volume at any hour of the night without disturbing 'outsiders.' This backstage area thus fuses the practicality of its 'firstspace' with the symbolic 'secondspace' image of its neighbourhood in order to be a genuine 'thirdspace' for local hip-hop culture. Consequently this *Lab* has also become the 'setting' for the DJ orchestra's promotional video teaser with which they advertise their upcoming shows. A close reading of the video's brief cinematic narrative will provide a more detailed insight into the ways in which the German DJs negotiate the three aspects of sociality, spatiality and historicality in their culturally hybrid turntable performance on screen.

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[289] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 70.
[292] Cf. Ibid.

Titled 'DJ Orchester – Mirko Machine, DJ Mixwell, DJ Stylewarz'[293] the video teaser begins with a sequence of close-up shots showing hands switching on a record player, releasing its needle on to a blue vinyl record and subsequently moving the record back and forth. The introductory images are accompanied by a female voice announcing: 'Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, hören Sie nun das DJ Orchester' (0:04). This five-second-long German phrase is immediately followed by an accelerated *autosonic* quotation of the first two instrumental bars of the song 'Paranoid' (1970) by English rock band Black Sabbath. Rock music and hip-hop have successfully collaborated in the 1980s[294] whereby Mikos explains that the appearance of rock music samples in hip-hop creates a fusion in which 'die (echte oder vermeintliche) Authentizität des Hip-Hop mit der Authentizität des schmutzigen, ehrlichen Hardrock vereint [wird].'[295] During this instrumental introduction the face and hence the identity of the DJ continues to remain obscure. Rather, the musical sound and the visual captions of the turntable dexterity are at the centre of attention (see Figure 1).

Another sequence of close-up shots reveals more hands moving vinyl, pushing faders and turning buttons until fifteen seconds later a cut to a medium shot finally frames all three DJs standing in between a shelf of vinyl records and a turntable played by DJ Mixwell. The DJs' appearance is defined by their performative self and hence by their classy 'personal front.' Mirko Machine diverges slightly with his appearance as he has exchanged his white shirt with a t-shirt and his bow tie accessory with a winter hat. The cut to the new cinematic frame is moreover accompanied by a new sonic layer over Black Sabbath's guitar riff. A male voice is heard, asking the audience in an American-English accent: 'are you ready?' (0:15). This question is simultaneously lip-synced by Mirko Machine whilst pointing to the camera and hence directed to the viewer. His ambiguous act of wordplay therefore linguistically characterises him as a US-American. Indeed, by engaging in such signifying practices via turntabling, DJs communicate via the manual manipulation of a pre-recorded voice rather than their own.[296]

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[293] 'DJ Orchester – Mirko Machine, DJ Mixwell, DJ Stylewarz', *Guesi2007* (Youtube, 18 November 2011) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bxv2y5Izll4> [accessed 1 January 2012].

[294] In 1986, for example, African-American hip-hop duo Run-DMC had successfully sampled from Aerosmith's song 'Walk this Way' (1975), leading to a musical hit that the two bands eventually recorded and performed together.

[295] Mikos, p. 77; Forman also mentions that in terms of hip-hop music's commercial crossover to a wider US-American consumer public 'the images and aesthetic codes of urban black culture were carefully merged with the outlaw stances of white rockers,' in Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 150.

[296] Cf. Katz, *Capturing Sound*, p. 133.

Figure 1: Hands on vinyl

The answer to Mirko Machine's question is, of course, not provided through live feedback by the intended audience but by DJ Stylewarz. A new cut shows him at the turntables where DJ Stylewarz continues looping the same *autosonic* quotation, yet enhances the guitar riff with a heavy drum base layer, thus musically affirming Mirko Machine's question (0:17). Following this communicative moment, DJ Stylewarz scratches 'twiddles' which were invented by London DJ Supreme during the Britcore movement. Having been part of the Britcore scene, this scratch style has established itself as a 'typischer Stylewarz Scratch auch. Das ist ein verspannter Unterarm und das geht halt derbe schnell.'[297] DJ Stylewarz scratches a rhythm pattern into the same female voice which was inserted in the beginning of the video teaser. Using the German word *'Das'* as an *allosonic* quotation and abstracting it through scratching, DJ Stylewarz eventually releases the vinyl record, allowing it to flow into the full resonation of 'das DJ Orchester' (0:20).

The remaining part of the teaser serves to introduce the individual members of the orchestra. In so doing, the DJs further engage in the turntable technique of word play. Mirko Machine, for instance, lip-syncs the announcement of his name, which is played by DJ Stylewarz (0:26). DJ Mixwell, on the other hand, plays his own autosonic introduction while merely directing his gaze into the camera (0:32). The full reference only unfolds when DJ Mixwell's colleagues point to him as the announcement appears. Lastly, DJ Stylewarz plays his name while also remaining muted behind the turntables. In this case, however, his identity remains ambiguous as he points to Mixwell and Mirko Machine behind him, with Mirko Machine lip syncing DJ Stylewarz' name instead (see Figure 2).

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[297] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.

Figure 2: Stylewarz

Within their unity as a German DJ orchestra, these individual acts of word play enable the DJs to take on different identities by playfully engaging in the African-American tradition of signifiying. Moreover, their performance depicts the way that 'the turntable is used in practice as a semiotic resource for making meaning. Together, the beat and the turntable are at the center of a structure of signs whose conventions and practice are under constant diachronic evolution.'[298]

Closing the scene, the *autosonic* quotation of 'Das DJ Orchester' is played one last time underlying the cinematic medium-shot that frames the three men for a final moment. The teaser subsequently ends with a change of the mise-en-scène in which the three DJs are seen placarding posters on walls in the *Schanzenviertel* (0:45). The music terminates with yet another *autosonic* citation saying 'check it out... like this!' until the visual image fades to black with a superimposition of '*Uebel und Gefährlich*' – the DJ orchestra's show location in Hamburg (0:49).

In sum, this brief video clip presents the culturally hybrid manifestation of Das DJ Orchester who fuse two divergent performative and spatial practices into one. This is firstly achieved by providing a hybrid cinematographic setting where a portion of the 'back' region of the *Lab* is re-mediated as the 'front.' This backstaged 'front' is, on the one hand, constructed though a mise-en-scène in which designated hip-hop 'tools' are re-functioned as staged 'props' and, on the other hand, through the DJs' 'personal front' which reflects their appearance on a live 'front' rather than their presentation of self in the 'back.'

In order to hybridise their music, the DJs 'Africanise' Black Sabbath's looped guitar riff by layering a drum beat on top of it. Moreover, in utilising *intertextual* quotations of

[298] Bakker and Bakker, p. 72.

two different languages, German and English, and by engaging in word play with which the DJs alter their sense of place and identity, they blur the linguistic signifiers that commonly serve to identify a culture. Similarly, DJ Stylewarz' use of twiddles musically defines him as an English DJ rather than German-American: 'Stylewarz ist auf jeden Fall, das hört man am Scratch Stil so definitiv von den Engländern beeinflusst.'[299] The only direct reference to their German national identity is the aural introduction enunciated in German which addresses a socially cultivated German audience comprising 'Damen' and 'Herren.'

Hence, the communal turntable performance of Das DJ Orchester 'tracks the dynamism within displacement and emphasizes the agency within specific practices of ironic appropriation or critical incorporation. It stresses that cultural categories, when inserted into different contexts, tend to take on contrary meanings and values.'[300] In so doing, Das DJ Orchester 'erases any essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures' (LOC: 83/4), as they do not specifically represent German culture, nor the direct adaptation of an Afro-American one. Rather, the three DJs mix both cultural traditions in order to provide a unique performance located in between European and African performative aesthetics.

2.5 Summary

After providing an overview of the spatial, historical and social conditions that have shaped hip-hop music, the second part of this chapter turned to its appropriation in West Germany and specifically looked at the ways in which DJing and music production were shaped by Hamburg's urban dynamics. The case studies revealed that the musical identity of the local hip-hop music community has relied heavily on Hamburg's 'secondspace' ideology, which promotes cultural open-mindedness and worldliness through the cultural flows and exchanges enabled by Hamburg's seaport. This open-mindedness also mobilised early hip-hop musicians to engage in the Britcore movement, and hence in musical sounds and traditions beyond their US-American musical role models.

The release of the album *Bambule* by Absolute Beginner further exemplified how local hip-hop artists used samples to represent their city, including samples from Germany's own musical history. Since member Jan Delay listened to Udo Lindenberg during his childhood, his personal memories of this German singer became a symbol of authenticity towards sampling Lindenberg in his hip-hop productions. Hence, by giving

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[299] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.
[300] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 111.

hip-hop a local German identity through the fusion of past sounds in present musical texts, which were identifiable by the German language, Absolute Beginner helped establish German hip-hop music in Hamburg.

This genre, in turn, became the first viable German music for other hip-hop artists, such as for Samy Deluxe. In continuing with the local historical narrative enabled by the aesthetic of sampling, Samy Deluxe has cited Jan Delay as a sign of his own cultural memories and past experiences of German music. While this example therefore emphasised local hip-hop music's cohesion in terms of spatial and historical continuity, it also served to highlight a social aspect, whereby an Afro-German hip-hop artist becomes representative of the cultural continuity of Hamburg's musical history.

Yet, the question remained whether hip-hop music has also cultivated a unique musical sound beyond the recognition of the German language in particular samples. While D-Flame and DJ Placeebo refuted the existence of a German sound due to German hip-hop artists' lack of courage towards taking a next step, DJ Stylewarz' reasoning addressed the supposed cultural stagnation in Germany, which inhibits cultural exchange, and hence the production of art and newness within art. These answers already suggest a divergence and even contradiction to the supposed unifying cultural force of hip-hop music, which allows different cultural and musical sounds to be combined into new arrangements. Hamburg's multicultural rap label 'Rattos Locos Records' has, however, shown that there exists the aim to create a local hip-hop 'U-boot sound.' In so doing, Rattos Locos engage in Hamburg's spatial-historical discourse that emphasises its maritime connection and liberal attitude towards foreign cultures or, in this case, towards foreign styles of music. By representing Hamburg and their local affiliation through a multiculturally-created hip-hop sound, the rappers also express a post-hybrid German identity, for their music represents their Afro-German or Pakistani-German bi-culturality as a part of their Hamburg locality.

While the analysis until this point engaged in music production, the following examples addressed the live, performative aspects of hip-hop music. These highlighted local artists' fusion of classical musical knowledge and performance practices with turntabling. DJ Ben Kenobi, for instance, learned how to DJ with previous knowledge of classical percussion, while Das DJ Orchester blended cultural codes of classical musical performances and DJing into a hybrid turntabling spectacle. Yet, despite their German ethnicity, neither DJ Ben Kenobi nor Das DJ Orchestra aim to iterate a local German identity through their music, unless one counts their clean approach towards turntabling and their use of German language in their samples. Rather, Das DJ Orchester engages in a class discourse by attempting to elevate hip-hop music's social status as a professional art form through their incorporation of classical performance traditions. It thus seems as if the DJs focus on their social struggles because their

'whiteness' is useless towards making a statement on cultural or ethnic acceptance within German and even European society. Thus, DJ Stylewarz claims: 'Ich möchte nicht nur als der Hip-Hop DJ, sondern auch einfach als irgendwie Musiker wahrgenommen werden. Sei es beim Auflegen [oder] als Produzent.'[301]

Hip-hop music in Hamburg can therefore be seen as immersed in two identity discourses: one, which emphasises local belonging, and one, which aims towards a higher class categorisation. While the technique of sampling in music production has been employed to create a local identity in music, the use of specific turntable techniques played by local DJs rather expresses an affiliation to a European music community than to a local German one. Whether music is the only hip-hop art form that expresses such different social aspects and claims of identity and belonging will be explored in the next chapter, turning to hip-hop dance in Hamburg.

[301] DJ Stylewarz, interviewed by author, 12 June 2012.

3 Hip-Hop Dance

3.1 Break Beats and Break Boys: The Emergence of Hip-Hop Dance

> 'See, the whole thing when hip-hop first started was the music was played in the parks and in the jams for the dancers, and those dancers were B-Boys [sic].'[302]

As this chapter turns to hip-hop's dance element, Bronx b-boy Crazy Legs' statement serves to highlight the connection between the musical art form of hip-hop, initiated by the hip-hop DJs, and the emergence of b-boys and subsequently of hip-hop dance. This connection is already inherent in the term 'b-boy' which is believed to have derived from 'break boy,' labelling the dancer who specifically danced during the break beats played by the DJ.[303]

In his book *Foundation: B-boys, B-girls, and Hip-hop Culture in New York,* Schloss, however, also explains that the abbreviation 'b-boy' may refer to a person who 'in keeping with the slang of the time, temporarily loses his mind, or "breaks," and expresses that in the dance.'[304] In an interview with New York b-boy Trac 2, the dancer further suggests that the label derived from '"Bronx-boy" because that's where we come from. "Battle-boy," because that's what we were. Or a "beat-boy," because that's what moved us.'[305] Trac 2's account of the b-boy etymology also captivates the spatiality, sociality and historicality of b-boying: the Bronx relates to the cityspace in which the art form emerged, the battle refers to the social context of the presentation of self, while the beats musically reflect the cultural histories of the Bronx' inhabitants.

Beginning with an overview of hip-hop dance from a spatial perspective, one needs first of all to return to the aforementioned 'thirdspace' experience of the Bronx, since the 'process of producing spatiality or "making geographies" begins with the body, with the construction and performance of the self, the human subject, as a distinctively spatial entity involved in a complex relation with our surroundings.'[306] This particular urban geography of the Bronx was visibly defined by its 'street corner *salseros'*[307] who accompanied the rhythms and sounds of Puerto Rican and Cuban drummers in parks

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[302] Crazy Legs in Fernando Jr, S H, *The New Beats: Exploring the Music, Culture, and Attitudes of Hip-Hop* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1994), p. 17.
[303] Cf. Kool Herc in George, Nelson, 'The Founding Fathers Speak the Truth', in Forman and Neal, eds., *That's the Joint!,* 2nd edn, pp. 43-55 (p. 46).
[304] Schloss, Joseph, *Foundation: B-boys, B-girls, and Hip-hop Culture in New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 59.
[305] Trac 2 in Ibid.
[306] Soja, *Postmetropolis,* p. 6.
[307] Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 42.

and other public venues. While living in this 'thirdspace' influenced the emergence of the DJs' neighbourhood block parties, it also legitimised dancing in urban spaces. As Schloss writes,

> [s]ince early hip-hop jams took place in the same spaces as street drumming – sidewalks, parks, public beaches and schoolyards – the experience of dancing to an extended, Latin-style percussion break played by a deejay in a park would have been extremely similar to the experience of dancing to live drummers in that park.[308]

Not only does this comparison draw upon commonalities between hip-hop culture and the overall lifestyle of the Bronx during that particular time but Schloss also mentions the specific 'firstspaces' on which the dancing unfolded, namely on sidewalks, in parks and in school yards. The materiality of these asphalted surfaces was not only dirty but also harsh, especially when considering that the art of b-boying developed a high number of floor moves compared to salsa dancing. Even though a piece of cardboard or linoleum protected the dancers from direct contact to their dance floor, Schloss explains that '[c]oncrete happens to be more conducive to footwork'[309] and that 'the *idea* of concrete – and its association with urban environments (literally, "the streets") – has a certain rawness that reads as historical authenticity.'[310] While 'historical authenticity' can describe the local albeit more abstract continuation of the aforementioned street corner salsa tradition and the cultivation of an outdoor urban lifestyle, it has also come to define the art of b-boying as being inextricably linked to this 'firstspace' condition. Hence, proving one's faithful engagement in this art form required a specific surface, 'leaving b-boys who unsuccessfully attempt air moves to nurse scrapes, sprains, and broken bones.'[311]

Yet, the rawness of the urban environment can also be understood beyond spatial terms, namely as a description of the social atmosphere of the Bronx. As b-boying gained its own autonomy as a dance form, it eventually transcended the initial party context into becoming a lesson about how 'one is to carry oneself in life, particularly with regard to the relationship between creativity and self-confidence.'[312] On the one hand, this presentation of self was influenced by the popularity of kung fu films in the 1970s.[313] Especially the martial art's philosophical approaches nurtured b-boying's positive focus on creativity and individuality beyond its kinaesthetic expression.[314] On the other hand, the self-assurance was fostered by a particular attitude that 'like the

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[308] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 20.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid., p. 96.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid., p. 45.
[313] Cf. Ibid.
[314] Cf. Ibid.

dance itself, requires a controlled aggressiveness [which] derives from the circumstances in which it arose: the New York streets of the '70s often required posture of barely restrained violence.'[315] While early b-boys inevitably represented 'the urban unrepentant poor [...] who are considered to be engaged in some kind of collective denial of the social order' (STGM: 144) due to living in a cityspace that was stigmatised by social marginality and financial despair, the local practice of b-boying became a strategy with which to gain a highly respected social status.

This strategy initially imitated the street gang culture and the territory wars within New York City's uptown neighbourhoods. In accordance with the social structures and hierarchies of these local street warriors, b-boys began forming dance crews following the same internal organisation of these gangs.[316] In some cases they even substituted their gang membership for a dance crew, leading to 'the general emphasis on defining one's identity through a superior dance style'.[317] Nevertheless, while gaining a social status through dance skills rather than through outright violence, b-boy crews continued to foster the same feeling of territorial supremacy, being 'almost always identified by their location of origin, even if that is now a city or a country rather than a city block.'[318] Hence, in order for the b-boy hierarchy and social statuses to remain intact, b-boys and their crews continued to battle for local recognition by 'claiming the streets with physical presence, using [their] body to publicly inscribe [their] identity on the surfaces of the city, to flaunt a unique personal style within a conventional format.'[319]

The format of these b-boy battles resembled improvised embodied dialogues between two dancers of opposing crews who kinaesthetically expressed themselves through 'cartwheels, kicks, and feints.'[320] By taking turns in attempting to outperform each other with dance moves a b-boy typically managed his social impression by successfully achieving 'to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him' (PSEL: 3). These kinaesthetic responses therefore followed an established structure.

A b-boy attack generally began with the dancer being in an upright position, performing fast and bouncy steps. These steps were influenced by a previous street dance developed by Latino gangs in Brooklyn called 'rocking.'[321] Hence, it is no

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[315] Ibid, pp. 84/5.
[316] Cf. Ibid. p 79.
[317] Ibid., p. 66.
[318] Ibid., p. 67.
[319] Banes, Sally, *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 145.
[320] Ibid. p. 128.
[321] Cf. Schloss, *Foundation*, pp. 125-54.

coincidence that 'uprocking' or 'toprocking' have come to describe b-boying's introductory dance steps which are also simply referred to as 'footwork.' 'Downrocks,' on the other hand, are steps performed on the ground. These are commonly danced after a toprock sequence and include so-called 'power moves' and 'air moves' which have visible elements of the martial arts, acrobatics and gymnastics. The end of a b-boy routine is then concluded with a provocative freeze position, often embodying 'references to TV, *Playboy*, comic books, kung-fu films,'[322] and directed in a boastfully or insulting manner to the rival.

These battles occurred on designated 'firstspaces' such as on local streets or at organised hip-hop jams. Here, the dancers presented themselves within a circle of people who formed the Goffmanian 'front.' This round, human formation became known as the 'cypher' and further served as 'a collective enterprise that mixes improvisation, competition, and mutual support'.[323] The cypher therefore heavily influenced the 'thirdspace' experience of a b-boy battle within the material 'firstspace,' whereby dance historian Sally Banes further claims that

> b-boying's spatial level called to mind capoeira, the spectacular Brazilian dance [...] but the two were dissimilar enough in shape and timing that capoeira seemed at most only a distant relative, and certainly one the break dancers weren't acquainted with – at least on a conscious level.[324]

By comparing the b-boy cypher to the 'roda' in capoeira, Banes nevertheless touches upon a cultural similarity between the Latino-African martial arts dance and b-boying. She captures the two influential cultures that created the art of b-boying in the first place, namely African-Americans and, more importantly, Latinos. The Latino influence on hip-hop dance has been most notably inferred by dancing to Latino music. Bronx b-boy Pop Master Fabel elaborates on this relationship, explaining that '[j]ust like when you see someone doing real dope mamboing to mambo music, or a salsa dancer who's tight on. You know... *it's the native of the dance...* the old-timers did it and still love it and keep it alive, because, honestly, I think that it's part of the ritual.'[325] This *native* ritual further highlights a kinaesthetic relationship which is also 'intrinsic to understanding African and African-inspired musics.'[326]

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[322] Banes, p. 128.
[323] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 99.
[324] Banes, p. 128; for a detailed overview of the dance styles and cultures that influenced the development and structure of b-boying in the Bronx see Pabon, Jorge, 'Physical Graffiti' in Forman and Neal, eds., *That's the Joint!*, 2nd edn, pp. 57-62.
[325] Pop Master Fabel in Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 25.
[326] Dimitriadis, Greg, 'Hip-Hop: From Live Performance to Mediated Narrative', *Popular Music,* 15 (2), (1996), 179-94 (p. 180).

According to Chris Small, African-derived music 'hardly exists as a separate art from dance, and in many African languages there is no separate word for it.'[327] Hence, mambo or salsa can either refer to the dance as well as to the specific musical genre. Similar to Rose's contrast of African-American and European musical structures presented in the previous chapter, Greg Dimitriadis especially contrasts European musical norms to the African-inspired Latino music where

> [u]nlike composed 'classical' European forms (arts which are represented by some sort of written score), such musics are brought to life through live production and concurrent improvisation. Such arts often reflect a more flexible lyrical or musical aesthetic than do Western arts such as classical European music.[328]

Hence, while in African and Latino traditions a listener is engaged in the music by dancing to it, Dimitriadis concludes that in Western culture '[p]hysical engagement is, accordingly, downplayed in favour of polite listening.'[329] Thus, with regards to the 'thirdspace' of the Bronx which was shaped by the sonic output of the hip-hop DJs' looped break beats of funk songs and salsa rhythms, Schloss asserts that 'b-boys and b-girls learn to feel history in their bodies through certain songs.'[330]

In addition to this aspect, the battle attitude and provocativeness of the b-boy performance has further been connected to an African-African background. Schloss, for instance, explains that '[c]reatively insulting one's opponent is a part of many competitive traditions across the African diaspora,'[331] while Carla Huntington Stalling reads hip-hop dance performances as

> a physical form of playing-the-dozens in African American communities, where Signification and Signifyin [sic] are taken to a most elevated and intellectual level. Simply stated, in the danced text, the men competed with each other through dance moves that outperformed challengers in the physical conversation, which is similar to what they do in the verbal dozens, where men compete with each other in making verbal commentary.[332]

Hence, the historicality of b-boying can, on the one hand, be located within the 'thirdspace' experience of the Bronx with its Latino street dancing tradition, its street gang culture and hip-hop DJs while, on the other hand, it can reach much farther back

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[327] Small, Christopher, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in African American Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987), p. 24.
[328] Dimitriadis, p. 181.
[329] Ibid., p. 182.
[330] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 41.
[331] Ibid., p. 111.
[332] Stalling Huntington, Carla, *Hip Hop Dance: Meanings and Messages* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2007), p. 40.

in history by drawing upon Latinos' and African-Americans' 'common roots that they recognised in each other's cultures.'[333]

Yet, the hybridising processes between popular culture and local ethnic heritages did not stop in the Bronx. Eventually, the West Coast funk style dances of, for example, popping and locking became incorporated into b-boying and hence into hip-hop culture, as well. Popping emphasised isolated muscle contractions simulating robots or imitating the flow of water through the body. Locking became known as a dance that focussed on swinging one's arms outwards and inwards, stopping in an abrupt 'lock' before continuing with the next movement. While it is commonly said that the 'old school' hip-hop dance styles comprise b-boying as well as popping and locking which led to the requirement of knowing a bit of every dance form in order to call one's self a b-boy,[334] 'new school' dance forms have been continually added to the umbrella term of 'hip-hop dance.' Consequentually, hip-hop dance has, according to Banes, become 'perhaps the quintessential form of popular dancing in the age of postmodernism, incorporating mixed allusions to the mass media and to high culture, and creating ironic narratives of personal and political identity.'[335]

The following analysis on hip-hop dance in Hamburg will engage in these danced narratives of personal identity, performed through b-boying, popping and 'hip-hop,' a hybrid dance form which is also known as 'new style' as it fuses the choreographic conventions of jazz and the performative battle practices of b-boying. Despite the dance forms' different aesthetics and histories, they nevertheless continue to abide by the same dance norms established through b-boying's spatial, social and historical circumstances as outlined above. In order to offer a close reading of these dance forms' different kinaesthetics, the following section will introduce an approch that captures the openness and flexibility of hip-hop dance yet also allows the focus to be narrowed down to individual movements.

3.2 Reading the Choreographies of Hip-Hop

Anthropologist Jane Desmond understands any performed dance as being a universal bodily text through which knowledge on 'how social identities are signaled, formed,

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[333] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 155.

[334] Cf. Beat Boy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

[335] Banes, p. xiv. For a comprehensive historical overview of all the dance styles which comprise hip-hop dance see Kimminich, Eva, 'Tanzstile der Hip Hop Kultur. Bewegungskult und Körperkommunikation', *KiF – Kulturen im Fokus* (Potsdamer Kulturanalysen, 2013) <http://www.kulturenfokus.de/content/tanzstile-der-hip-hop-kultur> [accessed 23 June 2014].

and negotiated through bodily movement'[336] can be gained. Detaching dance from any specific culture, genre or level of skill, Desmond suggests investigating danced texts by asking, amongst other things, the following questions:

> How does dance signal, enact, or rework social categories of identity?
>
> How do the meanings arising from the performance of various dance styles change as those styles migrate across national, racial, or class boundaries?
>
> How and what do we come to know through kinesthesia as a historically particular register of meaning?[337]

Relating Desmond's selected questions to a hip-hop dance context, the first inquiry touches upon the social aspect of hip-hop dance, namely on how social identity is managed, negotiated and presented through its performative norms and battle practices. The second question becomes relevant when looking at hip-hop dance in Germany, where it has migrated into new cultural spaces, either material or metaphorical which are framed by different boundaries. The third question picks up on this cultural and spatial transition by identifying hip-hop dance's *historically particular* significance as a kinesthetic expression in the new culture.

In order to answer these questions, the movements comprising hip-hop dance need to be read as an adaptation of individual and collective identities, which interact with other bodies in order to tell a narrative that is semantically situated in the world.[338] Such an approach to hip-hop dance will be facilitated through a theoretical framework derived from dance historian Susan Leigh Foster which is concerned with the choreography of dance. In her book *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance,* Foster announces five choreographic practices that treat dance as a cultural narrative. These comprise *frame*, *style, vocabulary, syntax* and the *mode of representation*.[339]

Analysing the *frame* explains the way a dance performance is presented in contrast to other events. In b-boying this aspect relates to the battle tradition and to the cypher in which the battle unfolds. Moreover, the *frame* includes paratexts that refer to the performance. Examples comprise the title of the dance show, the venue or the advertising format of the event. Investigating the *style* indicates the dance's unique position and identity within its genre of dance and places its artistic expression in a

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[336] Desmond, Jane C, 'Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies', in Desmond, Jane C, ed., *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 29-54 (p. 29).

[337] Ibid.

[338] Cf. Foster, Susan Leigh, 'Choreographies of Gender', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 24 (1), (1998), 1-21 (pp. 8/9).

[339] Cf. Foster, *Reading* Dancing, p. 59.

social context. Thus, according to Thomas DeFrantz, an overarching common *style* of hip-hop dance is defined by its 'explosive suddenness'[340] when an 'array of interlocking rhythms, percussive accents of isolated body-parts pop out in unexpected phrasing.'[341] In this sense, the 'assertive angularity of body posture and an insistent virtuosic rhythmicity'[342] seems iterative of the controlled aggressiveness of b-boying fostered through its derivement in a particularly harsh socio-urban context.

The *vocabulary* of the dance refers to the names of the individual steps that make up a dance sequence or an entire performance. The rules that regulate the choice and sequencing of steps are called the *syntax*.[343] Foster elaborates that variation is the 'overriding syntactic principle of dance'[344] which comprises dance steps on the floor to dancing in an upright position or fully losing touch with the ground by leaping and jumping. In b-boying, the common *syntax* begins with toprocks, followed by downrocks and ending in a freeze position. While the freeze position often imitated a popular cultural figure or reference, analysing the *syntax* of a dance performance not only serves to describe movement but can also highlight a particular meaning through movement. As Foster explains, the variation of *syntax* can make references to the surrounding world by establishing 'harmonies, tensions, and counterpoints that give the dance both its meaning and energy.'[345]

Yet, ultimately, it is the spectator's task to connect the dance's *syntax* into a readable text in order to decode its signification. This interpretative process can be stimulated by the dance's *mode of representation* which forms the last choreographic practice identified by Foster. The *mode of representation* is not to be confused with the aforementioned *style*, for the difference is that '[w]here the representational mode of the dance alerts the viewer to a broad framework for signifying the world, style in dance clarifies this framework by adding references to cultural identity.'[346] Hence, in order to make sense of the outside events that influence a dance's narrative, Foster differentiates between four methods of movement, listed as *resembling, imitating*, *replicating* and *reflecting*.[347]

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340 DeFrantz, Thomas F, 'The Black Beat Made Visible: Body Power in Hip Hop Dance' in Lepecki, Andre, ed., *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), pp. 64-81 (p. 77).
341 Ibid.
342 Ibid., p. 69.
343 Foster, *Reading Dancing,* p. 59.
344 Ibid., p. 79.
345 Ibid.
346 Ibid., p. 77.
347 Cf. Ibid., pp. 65-76.

By kinesthetically *resembling* an item, a single movement or formation of dancers focusses on dancing a certain attribute or quality of the item. The identity of the danced element may therefore remain unclear to the viewer. Through *imitating* an item, however, the choreography will attempt to give an accurate danced version of it, leaving little doubt as to what is being danced. The viewer is left to judge whether the imitation is achieved successfully or not. Through *replication,* a movement does not intend to mimic the phenomenon as such but to dance the dynamic relationship that constitutes part of this element. Lastly, a *reflection* may only refer to a certain aspect or characteristic of a chosen item which could nevertheless also be interpreted as belonging to a completely different phenomenon to the one which initially served as an inspiration for the danced movement. The focus therefore remains on the dancer rather than on the item conveyed through dance. While all of the aforementioned methods imply 'a stance toward the world that is crucial for the dance's meaning',[348] Foster asserts that usually only one of these methods dominates in a performance.[349]

Guided by Desmond's understandings and questions regarding hip-hop dance's cultural significance, as well as by the choreographic theory and kinaesthetic methods provided by Foster, the next section of this chapter will shift its attention from the development of hip-hop dance on the streets of the Bronx to its present manifestation in Hamburg. Taking into account the spatial, historical and social discourses that have shaped the norms and practices of this art form, the following analysis will introduce a brief historical overview of the way in which hip-hop dance has been adapted in West Germany before analysing the strategies taken by hip-hop dancers in Hamburg in order to make it meaningful within a contemporary German cultural context.

3.3 The Beginnings of B-boying in West Germany

> Wann checken Politiker und Kulturleute in Deutschland, daß [sic] Hip Hop-Kultur zwar in New York geboren wurde, aber heute weltweit besteht und diese Zeitepoche, in der wir leben, bestimmt. 1984 hieß es Modetanz. Was sagen sie jetzt? [...] Vielleicht ist den Politikern Hip Hop zu undeutsch?[350]

The '*Modetanz*' of b-boying was initially introduced in Germany through the same media and feature films that had inspired German DJs and music producers during the early 1980s. German b-boy and former world champion Storm elaborates that it was particularly the impact of *Beat Street* which became 'der Grund, warum viele Tänzer

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348 Ibid., p. 65.
349 Cf. Ibid.
350 Robitzky, Niels, *Von Swipe Zu Storm: Breakdance in Deutschland* (Hamburg: Backspin, 2000), pp. 93/4.

überhaupt erst angefangen hatten zu rocken. Wenn der Film in den folgenden Jahren im Fernsehen lief, kamen immer wieder neue Breaker zum Vorschein.'[351] Yet, similar to the German DJs' visual experience of hip-hop, the wave of emerging b-boys in Germany and their engagement in hip-hop's danced element was detached from the Bronx' 'thirdspace' experience which surrounded the youth on screen. As a consequence, German b-boy champion Jango states that 'bis der Tanz B-Boying [in Deutschland] richtig verstanden wurde, das hat 20 Jahre gedauert. Ich glaub 20 Jahre bis die Leute verstanden haben, dass eigentlich B-Boying nur B-Boying ist. Locking ist Locking. Popping ist Popping.'[352] This delayed understanding and knowledge of hip-hop dance becomes evident in the example of Hamburg b-boy Metin who began his hip-hop dance career by imitating steps,

> die man so aufschnappt aus dem Fernsehen oder so. Damals gab es ja kein YouTube und so weiter und so fort. Und dann hat mich jemand angesprochen was ich denn da tue. Ob ich weiß, was das ist. Und ich habe gesagt: ‚Ich mache *Rap Dance*!' *(laughs).* Und er meinte dann: ‚Nein, das ist kein *Rap Dance*, das ist *Break Dance*!'[353] Und dann habe ich gedacht: ‚Aha? *Break Dance*? Was ist das?'[354]

Metin's lack of contextual as well as contentual knowledge concerning the art of b-boying is what Banes considers to be a general consequence of the mediatisation processes of b-boying. According to Banes, the production and dissemination of hip-hop feature films in cinema and television

> changed both its form and its meaning. So to talk about breakdancing you have to divide it into two stages: before and after media. Before the media turned breaking into dazzling entertainment, it was a kind of serious game, a form of urban vernacular dance, a fusion of sports, dancing, and fighting whose performance had urgent social significance for the dancers.[355]

This analysis therefore concerns b-boying and hip-hop dance forms *after* the intervention of the media, when b-boying, according to Banes, gained 'a new meaning. It was no longer a battle for control of the streets, for neighbourhood fame.'[356] This does not mean that battles became obsolete, that dancing on the streets was not done elsewhere or that there was no aim for fame anymore. Rather, without the 'thirdspace' experience of the Bronx, the dance's norms and practices became filled with other social agendas and cultural histories. In other words, the same codes and signs of b-boying became representative of different cultural discourses in different national contexts.

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[351] Ibid., p. 24.
[352] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
[353] Incidentally, 'break dance' is a term coined by the media and not by the hip-hop community.
[354] Metin, interviewed by author, 4 May 2012.
[355] Banes, p. 144.
[356] Ibid.

In West Germany, b-boying initially unfolded as an imitation of the original kinaesthetic, yet soon transformed into a noticeable German style. Echoing Mirko Machine's aforementioned distinction between US-American DJs who, in contrast to European DJs, scratched 'so amerikanisch *un*sauber,'[357] Jango explains that German b-boys performed 'schöne Kombination[en], schöne, saubere Sachen.'[358] The clean and precise execution of dance steps eventually became known as 'straight German power.' While the label thus captures the straightness and hence exactness of the movements, it also describes the other dominant feature of early German b-boying which was 'mehr so powermäßig, mehr so viele Tricks, viele Powermoves, diese ganzen Akrobatiksachen.'[359]

This emphasis on acrobatics came as no coincidence. Growing up in Hamburg, Jango remembers that 'damals war halt als Junge Tanzen nicht so cool irgendwie. Wenn du getanzt hast, warst du eher nicht der coole Typ.'[360] In other words, an engagement in dance in West Germany did not re-enforce a statement of power or of masculinity, as it had done on the streets of the Bronx. This is because social dancing was not cultivated as a national tradition in which the art of b-boying could embed itself as a contemporary continuation. Rather, b-boying in West Germany became situated in another existing national narrative, namely in gymnastics.[361] Gymnastics, or *Turnen,* has formed a longstanding popular German sports tradition since its institutionalisation as a discipline by *Turnvater* Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in the early nineteenth century and has remained present in German schools' physical education classes and hence in everyday life until today. Therefore, boys in West Germany seemed to have made sense of the foreign kinaesthetic of b-boying by interpreting it as a form of *Turnen.* This does mean that this happened intentionally but since most of the b-boys would have been exposed to gymnastics rather than to a culture of public participatory dance they only had gymnastics as a starting point with which to make sense of the movements comprising b-boying.

Nevertheless, despite engaging in a gymnastic-framed approach to this new dance form, German b-boys also expanded its *vocabulary*. This has not only contributed to the development of new movements but also provided *vocabulary* with a German identity, for 'the power to name a dance movement represents a claim of authorship'[362] – be it

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357 Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.
358 Jango, interviewed by author 8 June 2012.
359 Ibid.
360 Ibid.
361 Cf. Gems, Gerald R, and Gertrud Pfister, 'Germans, German *Turnen* and *Turner* Clubs as "Cradles of Ethnicity"', in *Understanding American Sports* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 69-73.
362 Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 76.

personal or national authorship. Thus, an invented extension of the downrock move 'six-step' became the '*Brezel*.'

During the execution of the six step the dancer takes six alternating steps around the axis of his body whilst remaining in a crouched position. Both hands are used for ground support in order to stabilise the upper body while the legs fulfil the movement. Performed as a *Brezel,* Hamburg hip-hop dancer Can explains that 'man hat das Gefühl, dass man mit seinen eigenen Füßen quasi die Brezel schlägt.'[363] While demonstrating the basic six step, Can elaborates that

> Storm[364] hat sich dann gedacht: ‚Okay, es gibt noch andere Wege' *(turns while doing the six-step).* Und das war jetzt die erste Brezel zum Beispiel. [...] Nachher geht es dann noch weiter und dann hier noch rüber und dann drehen und das ist unglaublich. Und das ist alles choreographiert. Also es ist ganz klar: Es gibt die dritte Brezel, es gibt die fünfte Brezel.[365]

In other words, the step's *mode of representation* is achieved by *resembling* the abstract and contoured pretzel shape. Its *style* locates it in a hip-hop realm with a *vocabulary* further narrowing down its place of origin as German with pretzels having been representative of German baking traditions both in and outside of the country.[366] Expanding on German-derived hip-hop dance *vocabulary*, another example of a step is given by Hamburg popping dancer Azad. He explains that there exists

> eine Bewegung da macht man so, als ob man gerade das Auto anmachen würde. Und dabei gibt man so eine Bewegung von sich, dass es grad rütteln würde. Man nimmt ein Bein nach dem anderen nach oben. Das sieht immer ganz komisch aus, aber der Schritt kam aus Deutschland.[367]

The movement Azad describes thus *replicates* the exaggerated and hence comical bodily performance of getting into a car. Incidentally, this German dance step has been coined the '*VW*,' re-signifiying yet another German cultural product in order to refer to its place of origin, with *VW* moreover becoming metonymic of '*das Auto.'* As these two examples demonstrate the cultural re-appropriation of German cultural symbols as new signs of hip-hop dance moves, they also show that they rely heavily on stereotypical items that characterise Germanness.[368] This perspective on self-

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[363] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

[364] Storm has been Germany's most famous and successful b-boy, both nationally and internationally since his involvement in b-boying in 1982.

[365] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

[366] While historical debates locate the origin of the pretzel in Italian, French and German monasteries, by the middle ages the pretzel became a traditional Easter meal in Southern Germany and was subsequently exported to the United States by German immigrants in the 17th century. Cf. Ayto, John, 'Pretzel', *The Diner's Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2012) <http://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 2 September 2013].

[367] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.

[368] Similarly, a German scratch which was invented by world champion DJ Rafik from Dusseldorf was coined the '*Autobahn*' scratch. Cf. Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.

stereotyping can further be applied to the 'straight German power' style, namely as an embodiment of the straight directness and skilled efficiency which continues to remain attributed to the German national stereotype.[369] Taking these observations on b-boying's cultural adaptation into account, it could be concluded that the *Modetanz* has become something *'deutsch'* after all.

However, despite these strategies of cultural appropriation, 'straight German power' was not necessarily understood as a positive adaptation and development of b-boying. Rather, it contradicted b-boying as a *dance* which was adorned with acrobatic elements by solely focussing on the latter aspect. The clean execution of the power moves further led the dancers to appear similar to each other, whereby they lacked 'so dieses gewisse Eigene.'[370] Hence, German b-boys did not follow the b-boying norm and priority of 'defining one's identity through a superior dance style.'[371] The consequence of not having cultivated its dance element becomes evident by Azad who had never been

> interessiert am Break Dance, weil ich fand es halt schön, was die da gemacht haben, aber ich habe da keine Ästhetik rausgesehen am Anfang. Weil ich habe immer nur Powermover gesehen. Ich habe nur Leute gesehen, die natürlich diese Riesenstunts gemacht haben. Ich habe nie das Tänzerische gesehen.[372]

A reason for this is, according to Jango, because 'wenig deutsche B-Boys interessieren sich für die anderen Tanzarten so. Dass sie mal ein bisschen ihren Horizont erweitern und gucken: „Okay, was kann man ein bisschen einfließen in seinen Tanz, um ein bisschen was zu verändern?"'[373] A further reason can even be compared to DJ Ben Kenobi's refusal to play German hip-hop music since, according to him, the beats were not suitable for dancing. Indeed, Jango elaborates that 'in Deutschland ist es teilweise immer noch sehr schwer, dass die Leute wirklich so dieses Feeling zu der Musik haben.'[374] This observation also links to Samy Deluxe's statement which emphasised that there existed no cultural tradition which allowed German youth to experience German music as a meaningful marker of national identity. Hence, the struggle to *feel* music – a feature which was furthermore irrelevant in men's gymnastic routines – seems to be a plausible consequence of the distorted historical relationship to music and disinterest in dance, especially compared to the Bronx's b-boys who felt and

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[369] Just in 2013, BBC 2 launched the programme 'Make me a German' which aimed at understanding German society's successful as well as supposedly efficient lifestyle. A critical review of this programme can be found at Wallis, Emma, '"Make Me a German" | Europe | DW.DE | 08.08.2013', *DW.DE*. (Deutsche Welle, 8 August 2013) <http://www.dw.de/make-me-a-german/a-17007958> [accessed 9 June 2014].
[370] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
[371] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 66.
[372] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[373] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
[374] Ibid.

learned about their cultural heritage by specifically moving to the songs played by the DJs.

If the general consensus towards dancing was therefore marked by disinterest and even by a dis-identification with this form of self-expression, the question remains how b-boying could develop as a form of dance and at the same time as a German cultural practice. While DJs employed the techniques of turntabling and sampling which enabled them to re-discover German popular music and to situate themselves in a German historical narrative, how have b-boys 'Germanised' hip-hop dance without the opportunity to perform it as a present continuity of a national tradition that never really existed? The answers to these questions will be provided in the following section by looking at Hamburg's hip-hop dancers, such as Jango whose 'Ding war immer schon ein bisschen mehr zu tanzen. Bisschen mehr dieses Feeling, was eigentlich auch B-boying ausmacht so. [...] Allgemein dieses, dass B-boying auch Tanzen ist, wo man auf die Musik hören muss.'[375]

3.4 Hamburg and the German Identity of Hip-Hop Dance

> Wenn ich heute nach Hamburg gucke, sehe ich schon, dass Sonny mit dem was er gemacht hat sehr viel geprägt hat. Wir haben sehr viele Tänzer, die hier so ihren *eigenen* Charakter haben. So ihr eigenes Ding machen auf ihrer Art und Weise. Weil ich kenne andere Städte, da weißt du: ‚Okay, der kommt aus Berlin, der kommt von da!'[376]

Jango describes Hamburg's hip-hop dance community as a heterogeneous accumulation of characters and dance styles. Yet, he does so without mentioning Hamburg's 'secondspace' ideology which had been the central focus for the identity and sound of its hip-hop musicians. Rather, Jango attributes the state of diversity to the city's first competitive b-boy, SonnyTee who, in a way, can be seen as the personification of Hamburg's 'secondspace' for having grown up in St. Pauli as the son of a Javanese mariner and a Dutch mother.

Before hip-hop reached Hamburg, SonnyTee was firstly trained in kung fu, remembering that 'dann kommt Breakdance und natürlich passt genau, das perfekte Ding,'[377] thus concluding that he taught himself how to b-boy 'eigentlich mit dem Know-How von Kung-Fu.'[378] The pre-existing link between hip-hop dance and martial arts

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[375] Ibid.
[376] Ibid.
[377] SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.
[378] Ibid. The application of martial arts knowledge towards b-boying was especially relevant in terms of SonnyTee's battle tactics, since he explains that 'mein Trainer hat immer gesagt früher: „Wenn du kämpfst, dann solltest du die anderen vorher nicht zeigen, was du machen

therefore parallels b-boying's original function in the Bronx, despite the media's supposed distortion of hip-hop culture's original meaning. By engaging in b-boying without perceiving it as an aesthetic similarity to German gymnastics, SonnyTee's personal knowledge and experience, as well as his world champion status, have led him to be the local teacher and adviser for Hamburg's hip-hop dance community. This is a role common in b-boy culture, for Schloss explains that just as in 'Kung Fu, the b-boy educational system not only offers a traceable educational lineage, but often a strong, accomplished mentor.'[379] Looking back at his local influence, SonnyTee explains that

> warum ich auch auf Hamburg stolz bin ist, [...] dass jeder sich an seine[n] eigenen Style festgehalten [hat]. Und das ist, was ich erreicht habe aus den Hamburgern. So. Und das wollte ich schon immer, weil früher, als ich noch hier getanzt habe in Hamburg, habe ich anders getanzt und alle anderen tanzten, wie die Szene überall [in Deutschland].[380]

Reflecting upon the contemporary German b-boy scene, SonnyTee still claims that hip-hop dancers 'wagen keinen nächsten Schritt zu machen! Auch mit den Moves nicht! Das, was jemand schon mal gemacht hat, das machen die auch.'[381] According to the local b-boy, the reason for this lack of courage is that 'wenn man was Eigenes macht, ist es immer fremd. Und alles was fremd ist, muss man erst mal dran gewöhnt sein und dann heißt es immer: „Ihh, was ist das denn? Was machst du da? Ist das noch Breakdance? Oder nicht?"'[382] Compellingly, SonnyTee's observation resonates with DJ Placeebo's claim that German DJs and music producers are not as open towards change as their French or British counterparts.

SonnyTee's success in developing and maintaining local diversity within hip-hop dance has also been facilitated by Hamburg's metropolitan cityspace which offers many training and performance opportunities for its practitioners. Thus, urban 'firstspaces' remain relevant for the practice of b-boying, especially as spatial signifiers of hip-hop authenticity such as dancing on the raw surface material of the asphalt. Yet these spaces also spur territorial competition. An example of this delicate spatial discourse is presented by Jango, who remembers that in one account other local b-boys from Hamburg

> kamen auf unsere Plätze und meinten: ‚Ey, könnt ihr bitte weggehen!' So. So fing das an. Und jetzt immer mehr, immer mehr. [...] Weil, zum Beispiel, wir auch manchmal in die Europa-Passage kommen und dann sind die Jüngeren da. [...] [I]ch muss da mit denen diskutieren, dass wir jetzt kommen und sagen:

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willst. Die Moves. Und überraschen!" Und beim Tanzen ist [es] nix anderes.' SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.

379 Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 52.

380 SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.

381 Ibid.

382 Ibid.

> ‚Wir würden jetzt gern eine Streetshow machen.' ‚Nee!' Ich mein, okay, uns gehört der Platz nicht und so. Aber die wissen überhaupt gar nicht, warum die das überhaupt machen.[383]

While spatial territory remains equally important for contemporary German b-boys, it is not battled out in physical terms, such as it used to be the case in the Bronx, but is instead negotiated through hip-hop knowledge. The issue is therefore based on adhering to a faithful engagement with the art form. This faithfulness is defined through performing on a cemented 'front' in a public environment as well as through a thorough understanding of b-boying's norms. In this case, Jango touches upon the lack of respect by *'die Jüngeren'* towards the elders of the art form.[384]

Yet, by conforming to this spatial priority, the adherence to the art form's norms and practices also keeps the hip-hop dancers local, since they are tied to the physical space. This contrasts the global perspective of Hamburg adopted by the local DJs and music producers. While the city's 'secondspace' image served to support the mixing of musical knowledge and sounds into an innovative German hip-hop genre, the metaphorical spatiality of Hamburg does not carry the same significance in dance. Rather, Jango states that

> Hamburg hat auf jeden Fall dieses typische Großstadtproblem, dass es viele Tänzer gibt, aber wenig Leute die rauskommen, weil sie hier alles haben: Die haben hier Trainingsräume, die haben ihre Battles, die sie hier machen können. Sie können hier ihre Straßenshows machen.[385]

Hamburg's cityspace therefore becomes an arbitrary sign concerning its advancement and inhibition of hip-hop's art forms.

One of the few people who does get out of the cityspace is local popping dancer Azad. He leaves the northern German city in order to practice with his crew 'Baba Zula' in Berlin. Comprised of the most skilled popping dancers in Germany, it is with this group that Azad also represents Germany at international battles. Yet, despite being a national representative, the crew name does not linguistically reveal a German connection. Rather, it serves to portray the dancers' skills and the group's qualities by comparing these to the musical characteristics of the eponymous Turkish band Baba Zula. According to Azad, this music group plays

> abstrakte Musik. Und die [Popping] Gruppe bestand eigentlich mehr nur aus Leuten, die aus dem Nahen Osten kamen. Das heißt, wir haben einen Türken, einen Kurden, einen Iraner, einen Araber. Ist halt ganz lustig. War halt eigentlich nie, dass wir das so geplant hatten, aber irgendwie hat es sich so zusammengeschlossen und dachten wir nehmen uns auch einen

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[383] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
[384] Cf. Friedrich and Klein, *Is this real?*, p. 41.
[385] Ibid.

> orientalischen Namen, der uns auch irgendwo wiedergibt, weil wir sind auch irgendwo sehr abstrakt mit dem, was wir machen. In unserem Poppingstil. Und gleichzeitig ist es aber auch sehr orientalisch. So ein Touch. Und deswegen haben wir gesagt, das ist der Name: Baba Zula.[386]

Baba Zula thus consists of an amalgamation of heterogeneous histories that collectively represent one holistic place which in Bhabha's words becomes exemplary of the 'pluralism of the national sign, where difference returns as the same' (LOC: 221). Together, the members of popping crew Baba Zula open up a hybrid cultural space that situates Germany in a Middle Eastern cultural discourse. While signifying a united orientalism, the dancers, however, do not see themselves as an 'other' juxtaposed to a German cultural sphere but treat their oriental discourse as an enhancement to their dance genre. It provides them with a diversity and uniqueness expressed as abstract dance styles. At the same time, this intervention of cultural difference creates a common sense of belonging held together through the crew's understanding and faithful practice of popping. In so doing, the unison of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab and Iranian heritages under their shared German umbrella treats the Middle East as an imagined, holistic 'secondspace.' From a historical perspective then, the 'third space' created by the popping crew Baba Zula destabilises national boundaries and displaces Germany's historical present through their performances as culturally hybrid German dancers, despite Baba Zula's unconscious efforts to do so since the crew's heterogeneous cultural backgrounds were not an intended circumstance.

While Azad's participation in Baba Zula thus exemplifies the way in which dancers compete with dance crews outside of their hometown, other hip-hop dancers in Hamburg rather accentuate their local connection. Indeed, despite hip-hop dance's spatial contrast to hip-hop music's urban identity, it does not, however, eliminate hip-hop dancers' sense of pride and affiliation with Hamburg. Hip-hop dance crew 'Nordish by Nature' (NbN), for example, emphasises the importance to show, 'dass Hamburg da ist. Das wollen wir auch machen so. Das ist unser Ziel, dass wir einfach auch zeigen, Hamburg ist da!'[387] Hamburg in this case is represented as an imagined cityspace that is part of a wider 'Nordic' community. With Hamburg located in the northern region of Germany, and with its sea port having nurtured cultural exchange between other cities located on the coasts of northern Europe, the dance crew's name refers to a geographic as well as to a cultural community of transnational 'Nordicness'. While appropriated as a name that captures the location where the paths of NbN's members crossed,[388] it also explicitly links to Hamburg's hip-hop community, since the same name originally

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[386] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[387] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
[388] This statement pertains to the dance crew's own explanation on the origin of their name.

referred to the title of a nationally successful hip-hop track by local rappers 'Fettes Brot' which will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Joined underneath the banner of Nordicness, member Can nevertheless also states that, within the crew, every individual dancer 'ist *unique*. Man hat seine Persönlichkeit und man hat seine Skills.'[389] He exemplifies this by elaborating that 'ich habe einen ganz anderen Tanzstil als Franklyn oder Franklyn tanzt ganz anders wiederum als Andy.'[390] Compellingly, what is silenced in Can's emphasis on the dance crew's contrasting uniqueness are the various ethnic backgrounds of the dancers.[391] Hence, the phenotypical features that comprise NbN could also signify uniqueness in terms of the multiple cultures and ethnicities comprising its unity, for '[s]kin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as 'common knowledge' in a range of cultural, political and historical discourses' (LOC: 112). Yet, by representing a German city, NbN challenge the visible stereotype of the supposedly 'natural' northern German by deeming it irrelevant to determine a dancer's belonging. The physical attributes which are commonly identified as pertaining to a minority discourse do not come to signify a separation of the dominant German national narrative. Rather, through their slogan *'Stay Nordish! Stay Nature!'* in which the natural, biological bodies and appearances become inclusive of a culturally constructed Nordic identity, NbN recognise that 'the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*' (LOC: 56). While hybridity has indeed already been manifested in Baba Zula's approach to hip-hop dance as a German-Oriental form of expression, in the case of NbN the hybridity rather serves to claim a local German identity and therefore presents a post-hybrid state of Germanness.

Can articulates his post-hybridity with a strategy in which his Turkishness is nurtured by the Nordish locality of Hamburg, stating that 'ich bin hier geboren und ich sehe mich als Deutscher.'[392] This becomes especially evident in his presentation as a German hip-hop dancer for while it is 'unusual for b-boys and b-girls to dance under given names'[393] – the same holds true for hip-hop dancers of other subgenres – the dancer 'will choose a name that suggests qualities they wish to project in their dance'.[394] Can does not only dance under his official Turkish name but his name and hence quality of dance directly link to his Turkish background. Thus, the hip-hop dancer points out that 'ich habe da

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[389] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
[390] Ibid.
[391] The ethnic backgrounds comprise Middle Eastern, African, East Asian and Caucasian.
[392] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
[393] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 70.
[394] Ibid.

auch türkische Tänze gelernt so in meiner Familie. Ich habe auch türkische Einflüsse. Ich meine, weiß ich nicht, irgendwo her muss das ja kommen, dass ich die ganze Zeit immer so rumzappel.'[395] In other words, Can's passion for hip-hop dance seems to be motivated by his cultural access provided by the 'other,' namely his Turkishness that embraces dance as a social form of expression, with which he represents his local Hamburg identity.

This strategy of 'stigma' management is also adapted by Azad, who points out that despite competing with Baba Zula 'sage ich von erster Linie heraus so: „Ja, ich bin aus Hamburg." Und dann, wenn ich international vertrete, sage ich halt: „Ich bin aus Deutschland."'[396] Similar to Can, Azad dances under his given Kurdish name even though his official name is of Turkish origin.[397] Furthermore, while having lived in Germany since the age of three, Azad's access to dance was likewise primed by his Kurdish heritage rather than by a German cultural context. The dancer explains that

> meine Kultur, in der ich aufgewachsen bin, ist halt kurdisch. Kurdisch-deutsch. Und zum Beispiel bei Hochzeiten habe ich immer meinen Vater gesehen [...]. Man tanzt ja im Kreis, aber an den Händen. Also man kann das auch als *Halay*[398] sehen. Und immer die ersten drei Tänzer vorne sind immer voll ausgerastet. Sie waren halt immer noch in diesem Schema, in dieser Bewegung, aber haben gegroovt. Das heißt, die waren immer voll locker, haben immer die Schulter mit dem ganzen Kopf und das war schon fast Trance-mäßig. Aber sie waren immer noch in der Musik und man hat das voll gespürt. Und dann habe ich schon als Kind meinem Dad wirklich zugesehen, wie er nach dem Tanz mit so einem glücklichen Gefühl, mit so einem Gefühl von Freiheit wiedergekommen ist, dass ich mir nur gedacht habe: ‚Wow! Krass.' Also war ich schon immer damit irgendwo berührt.[399]

By experiencing Kurdish culture practiced in Germany, Azad has gained a feeling for music and an interest in dance which Jango had previously deemed as lacking in most German b-boys. Moreover, this cultural experience fills the gap highlighted by Samy Deluxe by which German youth was unable to experience and hence to identify with German music, which in the case of Azad and Can was substituted by their access to their 'other' culture. In this context, Azad's personal experience of observing his father relates dancing to the feeling of happiness and, more importantly, to freedom. Incidentally, it is this attribute that is re-enforced through Azad's name which means 'free' in Kurdish.

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[395] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
[396] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[397] Born in Syria, the Kurdish name 'Azad' chosen by his parents was not permitted by Syrian officials, forcing Azad's parents to choose another name which reflects his mother's Turkish nationality. Cf. Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[398] A *Halay* is a festive traditional Turkish folk dance generally performed by men who hold on to each other's shoulders or hands in order to form a circle.
[399] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.

According to Azad, 'Tanzen für sich selbst war schon immer mit dem Gefühl von Freiheit gebunden, weil, wenn du dich irgendwann nicht mehr frei fühlst beim Tanzen, dann ist es kein Tanz mehr.'[400] In hip-hop's dance genres, this freedom is created by the improvised practices of the dance and the ability to infuse *style, vocabulary* and *syntax* with an individual approach. Can contrasts this artistic freedom to the rigid framework of ballet, explaining that hip-hop dance is

> freier als Ballet. Als ich in der Ballet Class stand, war es mir anfangs sehr unangenehm. Ich stand da und musste quasi irgendwie *pas-de-bourré*, *tondue* und sowas alles machen, und *piqué*.[401] Und dafür gibt es so viele Begriffe, die man lernt und man kann sie alle tanzen! Das ist unglaublich! Also [mein Lehrer] hätte mir eine Vokabelliste geben können. Vier Seiten. Und ich hätte sie erst mal lernen müssen, ne? Und im Hip-Hop gibt es zwar auch gewisse Basics, die man auch nennen kann. Aber allein da fängt es schon an: Jeder tanzt diese Basics anders einfach, weil man sich im Hip-Hop freier fühlen darf, freier fühlen kann. Und gerade *das* macht den Tanz aus, dass er so frei ist. Dass jeder in den Tanz oder in die Musik etwas rein interpretiert und sich einfach darauf bewegt und dadurch entsteht einfach so unterschiedliches Material von Menschen. Das ist unglaublich *(pauses).* Freiheit. Ja. Ganz viel Freiheit.[402]

Thus, Can and Azad welcome hip-hop dance's open orality as opposed to ballet's fixed literacy. Yet, this open and free approach towards hip-hop dance also leads to the question whether the creation of a specific German hip-hop dance style is even achievable. While 'straight German power' was deemed an unfaithful approach to hip-hop dance, its rigid and clean execution that made all dancers look similar nevertheless identified the style as German. By altering this engagement in hip-hop dance the linear cultural historicality is distorted, since 'foreign' cultural inputs are being applied to present a contemporary dance tradition pertaining to Germany. In other words, with hip-hop dance becoming treated as a free and democratic form of *dance*, this particular approach to the art form has been mobilised by a pluralism of forces beyond the German cultural realm which, in the end, seem to leave the kinaesthetic of German hip-hop dance identity-less.

A new strategy with which to provide German b-boying with a German identity was therefore to dance to a nationally identifying song. The song 'Ich liebe deutsche Land (De Det De Det De Dä)' (2001) by Verna Mae Bentley-Krause, for example, reached high popularity throughout the country after being promoted by German comedian and television host Stefan Raab. A snippet of this German hit was in turn utilised in a

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[400] Ibid.

[401] *Pas-de-bourré*, *tondue* and *piqué* refer to specific dance steps in ballet which have also transcended into jazz dance and hip-hop dance. While Can took ballet classes in order to broaden his knowledge on different dance styles, he now employs *pas-de-bourrés*, for example, in his own hip-hop choreographies.

[402] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

choreography by Hamburg's b-boy crew Muppets in 2004. While performing their dance at the national 'Battle of the Year' competition, Jango recalls that his brother Chris Rock

> [hat] auf einer Hand gehüpft und da war dieses *‚Ich liebe deutsche Land'* von Stefan Raab. *‚Ich liieebe deutsche Land'* (*sings*). Und auf diesem Lied hat er halt so einen Sprungpart gemacht. Es war halt witzig, aber auch irgendwie voll krass, weil er [das] auf das Lied gemacht hat und das war halt so innerhalb von einem halben Jahr kannte es irgendwie ganz Deutschland mit dieser Show.[403]

While 'Ich liebe deutsche Land (De Det De Det De Dä)' is indeed sung in German, the impact it had as a b-boy performance becomes more complex than basing its resonance on the previous commercial success. The first issue that arises in this context is the fact that Bentley-Krause is not German herself but became a German resident after having been stationed in West Germany with the US-army in the 1980s.[404] Her foreignness was moreover immediately tied to the song as it was recorded as a home video, displaying Bentley-Krause's ethnicity as being African-American. By presenting herself as a German minority, the singer nevertheless praises, albeit in grammatically broken German, the positive attributes that she associates with Germany. Furthermore, Bentley-Krause's initial misspelling of the nation's name '*deutsche Land*' instead of '*Deutschland*' remained the title of the song, for according to the singer it 'gave people something to laugh at, which made it an even bigger hit.'[405] In other words, the popularity of this German track is evidently influenced by racial parody, framing the black US-American singer as an exotic subject within a German cultural realm.

B-boy Chris Rock is half-Cameroonian and hence visibly defined as black which inevitably makes his kinaesthetic interpretation of this song more compelling. Through the black embodiment of Bentley-Krause's song, the German b-boy engages in the continuation of a minoritised national narrative of Germany, and one particularly pertaining to the Afro-German experience. However, in both cases, the performance of the song as well as its kinaesthetic interpretation claim a national affiliation which relates to Bhabha's observation that '"national" cultures are being produced from the perspective of disenfranchised minorities' (LOC: 8). Managing their tribal 'stigmata' by writing, performing or interpreting a song that expresses great passion for Germany, it becomes intriguing to think whether this statement of national affiliation would have succeeded if the singer of the same song and even the b-boy were of 'white' German

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[403] Jango, interviewed by author 8 June 2012.
[404] Cf. Mraz, Steve, 'European Spotlight: Verna Mae Bentley-Krause', *Stars and Stripes* (14 July 2008) <http://www.stripes.com/news/european-spotlight-verna-mae-bentley-krause1.80960> [accessed 3 September 2014].
[405] Bentley-Krause in ibid.

ethnicity. Perhaps it is only through the use of a shared familiar language with a foreign tribal 'attribute' with which positive national feelings towards Germany may be expressed and even normalised in the first place.

Shifting the focus to a different example of musical accompaniment as a strategy of national identification, it should also be mentioned that in 2010 the culturally heterogeneous Berlin-based b-boy crew Flying Steps have been interpreting German classical composer Johann Sebastian Bach's music in their show 'Flying Bach.' While this example touches upon the employment of instrumental music, it is also another attempt to give hip-hop dance a national identity through the aid of German musical history, and in this case, through a social discourse of 'high culture' due to the choice of classical music. Moreover, by creating a b-boy show performed at indoor venues, Flying Bach not only elevates b-boying in a social context but in a spatial one, as well, namely from the 'firstspace' of the streets onto the stage. This spatial aspect is particularly emphasised by Azad who addresses hip-hop dance's social 'stigma' by stating that 'man hat vor Balletttänzern so einen krassen Respekt! „Das ist der, der hat mit keine Ahnung zusammengearbeitet und der ist halt in dieser Kompanie oder dies oder das." Und dann sagt man so: „Ja, man ist ein Hip-Hop Tänzer und man tanzt auf der Straße." *(laughs)* Das war's.'[406]

With classical European dance performances such as ballet being traditionally performed in theatres where the audience engages in 'polite *viewing*,' hip-hop dance's traditional *frame* of the streets within a participatory cypher evidently challenges the established performance norms familiar to a German audience. The consequence of this spatial discrepancy has already been lamented by Storm who writes 'so wie ich früher von Hip Hop-Jams träumte, auf denen es hunderte von Tänzern gab, so träume ich jetzt davon, daß [sic] unsere Tanzformen einmal genauso selbstverständlich in Theatern performt werden, wie die institutionalisierten Tanzkünste.'[407] This statement can be compared to Das DJ Orchester's class discourse in terms of expressing social status via the appropriation of certain spaces and of certain codes of fashion. In order to counteract this same 'stigma' of hip-hop dance, Storm thus proposes to perform b-boying in spaces that are familiar to and respected by a German audience and which elevate the art form's social status.

Yet, vice versa, the theatre stage remains a foreign *frame* to hip-hop dance. While SonnyTee has performed in 'Schmidt's Tivoli. Schmidt Theater hier in Hamburg. Jeden Abend, jeden Tag, oder beim Hansa-Theater,'[408] the b-boy concludes that 'da geht man

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[406] Azad, interviewed by author, 24 May 2012.
[407] Robitzky, p. 121.
[408] SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.

auch kaputt. Da ist dieses *Feeling* nicht mehr da.'[409] Hence, while hip-hop dance may be better understood as pertaining to contemporary German culture by performing it to German-derived music and/or on elevated, indoor stages, such a change in 'firstspace' simultaneously distorts b-boying's norms and practices by losing its values and priorities. Unless the aim is indeed to create a hybrid spectacle which fuses hip-hop with German culture in order to create a completely new visual and aural experience, such as 'Flying Bach,' discerning the German identity of hip-hop dance may have to result in changing the perspective of what 'Politiker und Kulturleute' understand contemporary German culture to be, as previously criticised by Storm. The following close reading will exemplify this approach by looking at the spatial appropriations, social statements, and historical awareness of Hamburg's hip-hop dancers who bridge the original practice of b-boying with their contemporary representation of Germanness in a street show in Hamburg's city centre.

The *frame* of this street show is first of all a cinematic one, for the close reading is based on a camera recording of a performance by a conglomeration of local b-boys on 24 March 2012.[410] The performance took place at a 'firstspace' located in a public square between the Europa-Passage and Karstadt in the *Mönckebergstraße*. Within this public 'firstspace,' the stage or 'front' of the show is created by a cypher formed by passers-by of which the camera's point of view forms part. The filming begins when a young man of East-Asian appearance, whose 'personal front' is defined by a white t-shirt, blue jeans and trainers, approaches the centre of the cypher. He announces the upcoming show in standard German (0:03). Behind him, the shot reveals the adjacent spectators of the cypher, as well as other young men standing within the circle. They are united by a similar choice of fashion, yet visibly comprise different ethnicities, including Caucasian, African and Middle Eastern.

Following the welcoming address, Jango walks through the frame of the camera as he circles the audience shouting: 'Ich brauche alle Hände hier! Ein bisschen Stimmung, meine Freunde!' (0:08). At the same time, he briefly stops in front of the lens (0:10). During this moment, the white letters on his black t-shirt become readable as 'Jango P.Nd Jackson.' His full artist name thus further consists of his initials P. Nd.[411] and of a tribute to Michael Jackson who was 'so die größte Inspiration. Ich glaube mit vier Jahren, fünf Jahren, hab' ich den so gesehen. Hab' das alles nachgemacht, was er gemacht hat'.[412] After Jango continues walking onwards, a mash up of the track 'Feel

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[409] Ibid.

[410] '24. März 2012: Sonne', *Kanal von lizzarteos* (YouTube, 31 March 2012) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdH895tVPHk> [accessed 11 April 2012].

[411] The letters 'Nd' form the first two consonants of Jango's Cameroonian last name.

[412] Jango, interviewed by author 8 June 2012.

Good Inc' (2005) by English trip-hop group Gorillaz is released from a ghetto blaster off-screen. As soon as the music is heard, Jango and the remaining four dancers begin to animate the crowd by clapping to the beat.[413]

When the vocals of the song set in, the five b-boys transition from animating the crowd to performing a brief top-rock sequence (0:32). This danced introduction immediately identifies the *frame* as a street show and the *style* of the dance as b-boying. Moreover, the b-boy formation can be treated as a Goffmanian 'team,' similar to the DJ orchestra. From this social perspective, their dance routines can be read as a 'pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented and played through on other occasions' (PSEL: 16) and which therefore 'may be called a "part" or "routine"' (PSEL: 16). Thus, after the group choreography finishes, all dancers retreat to the back of the cypher with Jango remaining in the centre. His routine marks the first of a variety of pre-established patterns of actions performed within the human circle.

The first movement of Jango's performance begins with a quickly alternating left and right hand brushing through his hair whilst remaining otherwise immobile (0:40). Grown to an afro, this performative statement comments on Jango's hair as a racial signifier and as a marker of his b-boy identity, for his hair has been a defining attribute of his energy since childhood: 'Ich war als kleiner Junge schon so voll flippig und immer viel unterwegs und [mit] meine[n] Afrohaare'.[414] Following the traditional b-boying *syntax*, Jango engages in his dance sequence with toprocks that are rapid and jagged, echoing the sound of the fast percussion beats in the song. His progression to the floor, to the raw environment of the asphalt, is initiated by a succession of rolls over his upper back with interval landings on his feet before fully engaging in downrocks and variations of six-steps. Shooting into an upright position, Jango lastly freezes in a pose *imitating* Michael Jackson (1:03). With a dance position frequently associated with the former African-American pop star, Jango applies this choreographic *mode of representation* by rising to the tip of his toes and turning his knees inwards while looking downwards (see Figure 3).

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[413] The city of Hamburg does not officially support street shows, since, according to SonnyTee, 'Künstler müssen sich anmelden und genehmigen lassen, um da Straßenshow zu machen und das ist auch noch Gesetz, dass du nur [eine] halbe Stunde auf einem Platz verbleiben darfst.' He further emphasises that 'mit Anlage darfst du normalerweise gar nicht. Es ist verboten in Hamburg mit einer elektronischen [Anlage] zu tanzen. [Man] darf nur mit Live-Instrumenten.' SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.

[414] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.

Figure 3: Jango posing on his toes

Transitioning from his *imitation* with which he pays personal tribute to his role model, Jango completes a full turn, landing with his legs over a hip-width apart. He then ends his routine with a final stroke through his hair, framing his Afro-Germanness as an inherent part of his presentation of self (1:04).

Following Jango's routine, local b-boy Crazy D enters the camera frame with a side flip (1:08). While wearing black trousers and a black t-shirt, it is his Middle Eastern phenotype that hints at his Afghan heritage. His name, however, serves to capture his energetic, aggressive and therefore 'crazy' dance style with the letter D forming the initial of his official first name. Returning to the centre of the cypher after his leap, Crazy D also follows the traditional b-boying *syntax* by engaging in a toprock sequence. Yet, midway through the routine he realises that the crowd has ceased to clap to the beat. In order to re-animate the viewers and foster their participation in the cypher Crazy-D stops his movement and begins to clap instead (1:13). Succeeding in bringing the audience to participate again, Crazy D does not, however, continue with toprocks but rather performs a brief salsa sequence (see Figure 4).

Comprising only four steps, his improvised choice of this particular *style* of dance momentarily links b-boying to its original socio-historical context of the street corner *salseros* of the Bronx.

Figure 4: Crazy D dancing salsa

In so doing, Crazy D also emphasises b-boying as being a hybrid dance genre, and hence a genre in which salsa steps can be added as a viable movement within the *syntax* of b-boying. Crazy D subsequently proceeds to perform downrocks. When approaching the end of his routine, he rolls off over his shoulders before doing a mid-air 360° body turn in a horizontal position and landing flat on his back. After a brief pause, Crazy D jumps onto his feet and freezes in a handstand before giving Battle Buddha the lead to commence his routine (1:30).

Battle Buddha is the only ethnic German dancer performing in this street show as well as the only b-boy whose 'personal front' is adorned with a hat, besides wearing a blue denim jacket over a white t-shirt and blue jeans with trainers. With an execution best described as flexible floppiness, Battle Buddha's artist name serves to reflect his unique dance quality for he frequently knots his legs in the lotus position, *resembling* the image of Buddha. Hence, despite his ethnic German background Battle Buddha's personal *style* is not related to a clean and straight German power movement, but to oriental religion instead.[415]

Battle Buddha initiates his routine by running across the centre of the cypher with his hands held behind his back. He proceeds to reverse his steps whilst bringing his arms over his head to the front of his body without unlocking his hands (1:33). Moving directly into downrock sequences, his floor movements are filled with contortions showing off his back and leg flexibility (see Figure 5).

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[415] SonnyTee explains that Battle Buddha danced similar to the general German b-boy scene before the local mentor made him realise his unique strengths and creativity as a dancer; cf. SonnyTee, interviewed by author, 29 August 2012.

Figure 5: Battle Buddha showing off his flexibility

Remaining on the ground, Battle Buddha ends his performance with a ten-second-long balance on his right hand, whereby his right elbow is tucked into his rib cage in order to hold his own body weight in a horizontal position whilst facing upwards (1:52). When he finally returns to his feet, Battle Buddha shares a final moment with the audience by clapping with them before walking to the back of the cypher, joining his fellow 'teammates.'

As these three routines provide sufficient insight into the way b-boys in Hamburg engage in hip-hop dance, the close reading of this street show concludes that a local performance of b-boying has the ability to re-evaluate contemporary visions and notions of Germanness. In terms of spatial appropriation, the b-boys adhere to the original *frame* of b-boying where the 'front' and 'back' regions come to share the same space within the cypher. Its division is not marked by a visible material barrier nor by the appearance of the dancers, for their 'personal fronts' remain the same after and prior to the show. It is this observation which echoes hip-hop's norm of 'keeping it real,' by re-presenting the same social identity, regardless of whether being in the 'front' or in the 'back' region. Thus, the b-boys create a social 'third space' where 'front' and 'back' regions as well as the respective behaviour and appearance fuse into one for the sake of a faithful engagement in the art form. Having said this, it is the case that the dancers resort to a more distanced 'back' region for training purposes, just as the DJ orchestra practices in the *Lab.* These regions are primarily located in indoor youth centres. With training thus not happening on the streets, these public shows primarily function as a measurement for commitment and skill, by employing the 'firstspace' materiality as the authentic spatial surface on which the art of b-boying requires to be performed.

The b-boys' performance in local public 'firstspaces' also contributes to the multicultural ideology of Hamburg's 'secondspace' by physically creating its 'thirdspace' experience through street shows which at the same time represent the pluralism of ethnicities. Yet, the dancers' 'making of geographies', to use Soja's terms, does not reveal a specific Germanness about it, nor a specific urban locality. While the *frame, style, vocabulary* and *syntax* all link to b-boying, the *modes of representations* incorporated by Jango (e.g., his *imitation* of Michael Jackson), Crazy D (*replicating* the danced relationship between salsa and b-boying as a dance) and by Battle Buddha (e.g. *reflecting* a characteristic of the Buddha statue) rather serve to represent the dancers' personal life experiences, individual skills and b-boy identity instead of mirroring any stereotypically identifiable Germanness. As Battle Buddha is moreover the only ethnic German in the 'team' he can rather be understood as having a 'courtesy stigma' (Cf. STGM: 30) which provides 'a model of "normalization," showing how far normal could go in treating the stigmatized person as if he didn't have a stigma' (STGM: 30/1). The cultural background of the b-boy performance would therefore presumably remain unknown to the viewer if it were not for the b-boys talking German during their announcements.

In addressing the wider German society in their common language, the b-boys bridge their familiar verbal form of expression with their foreign bodily performance. Indeed, as Goffman notes, the 'information, as well as the sign through which it [the stigma] is conveyed, is reflexive and embodied; that is, it is conveyed by the very person in the immediate presence of those who receive the expression' (STGM: 430). In this sense, the dancers employ the strategy of emphasising their supposed embodied difference while treating the 'receivers' of this expression as their equal, as an inclusive social category, who are participating in their performance. Jango thus incorporates his African hair in his dance routine while at the same time addressing his German audience as *'meine* Freunde.' His presentation of self through danced 'routines' therefore aims at presenting his German b-boy identity as a post-hybrid state of identity where different ethnicities are inclusive of the contemporary concept of Germanness. His national patriotism is even expressed as a strong aversion against German b-boy fans who support a different nation at international b-boy battles:

> Du gehst halt zu *Battle of the Year* und auf einmal kommen die deutschen Leute mit einer Korea Fahne, wie beim Fußball. ‚Korea! Korea!' Wo ich mir denke: ‚Cool, dass ihr die mögt, aber... ist irgendwie kein Fußball so.'[416] Es ist natürlich cool, dass sie so angefeuert werden und so, freut mich, aber, ey, da bin ich auch dann so ein bisschen patriotisch. Wo ich sage: ‚Ey, wir sind doch

[416] By contrasting b-boying to football, Jango at the same time clarifies that b-boying follows different behavioural norms than Germany's national sport, despite its same ability to represent and conjure national pride at sport events.

> Deutsche! Entweder wir feiern uns oder wir feiern gar keinen. So. Selbst wenn wir jemanden feiern, sind wir einfach ruhig.'[417]

Jango's statement not only shows that he and his 'teammates' fully accept post-hybrid identity concepts but that there is even an expectation amongst culturally hybrid German hip-hop dancers to identify with Germany. In acknowledging that hip-hop dance creates and fosters a mono-national identification through multicultural practices, this art form allows its practitioners 'to define various aspects of their identity, develop strategies for integrating that identity into a larger social world, and then actually practice doing so.[418] However, this integration of identity is not yet fully understood by German audiences. Rather, it seems as if hip-hop dance is captured in its hybrid kinaesthetic presentation of self which is not able to transmit this new perspective of Germanness to the common viewer. As this dance form will always look hybrid, it cannot resonate with familiarity when presented exclusively through danced movement.

3.5 Summary

Following the overview on the spatial, historical and social conditions that have created hip-hop's second element, this analysis has shown that, similar to DJing, b-boying in West Germany was initially practiced as an imitation of its original. Yet, it soon became framed as a pseudo-continuation of an already established tradition of gymnastics and known for its 'straight German power' movement. It was suggested that this appropriation was due to the lack of previous German traditions of public participatory dance. Especially ethnic German male dancers rarely identified with a performative approach to dance, with the exception of perhaps ballroom dance or dancing in a darkened indoor dance club.[419]

In Hamburg, however, the majority of hip-hop dancers followed the approach of local role model SonnyTee, who rejected the nationally-established style of b-boying. Hence, this analysis has highlighted that Hamburg's hip-hop dance tradition is not discernable as a German art movement but as a diverse and individualistic performative art form. Yet, in contrast to the 'secondspace' ideology of Hamburg that influenced and authenticated a culturally-diverse approach to hip-hop music, this chapter has established that spatial discourses are treated differently between hip-hop music and hip-hop dance. In dance, it is the 'firstspace' materiality of the urban surface that rather

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[417] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
[418] Schloss, *Foundation*, p. 69.
[419] Cf. Friedrich and Klein, *Is this real?*, p. 181.

remains the marker of authenticity. This, in turn, makes the local hip-hop dancers seem parochial and inward-looking compared to their musical counterparts, as their spatial priorities do not support cultural exchange and mobility beyond urban borders. Nevertheless, the expression of an urban affiliation has remained important for dancers, as well.

Nordish by Nature, for instance, represent Hamburg as a multicultural cityspace through the amalgamation of different ethnicities within their dance crew. In so doing, NbN also allude to a post-hybrid state of identity in which multiethnicity is representative of contemporary Hamburg or even of Germany, depending on the location of the competition. Furthermore, NbN member Can's access to other cultural dances has consciously or unconsciously mobilised him to engage in hip-hop dance. This was also the case with popping dancer Azad, whose passion to dance was primed by his Kurdish cultural and musical sensibilities. By competing with Baba Zula, Azad's abstract dance style moreover serves to represent a cultural hybrid space located between Germany and the Middle East, which is shared with the cultural histories of his crewmembers. NbN, on the other hand, rather represent a local German identity without direct ties to another, real or imagined, *Heimatland*, showing that different hip-hop dancers from Hamburg engage in different identity discourses. Nevertheless, in both cases, Azad and Can emphasise the importance of experiencing music through dance – an approach which was enabled by their 'otherness,' rather than their Germanness.

With these claims of representation and identity revealing the complexity of hip-hop dance as an expression of belonging, its freedom of movement has blurred its German identification even further. The only strategy that seems to provide hip-hop dance with a direct national identity is the employment of German music, either in the form of German lyrics or of German classical compositions. An example of the former strategy presented in this chapter, however, challenged the danced message of cultural acceptance and normalisation of the Afro-German hybrid in a German context by interpreting a musical narrative that was based on a self-parody of an African immigrant living in Germany. The employment of classical music as well as the performance on theatre stages have, on the other hand, attempted to elevate the social status and acceptance of hip-hop dance as part of Germany's established dance culture, similar to the strategies employed by Das DJ Orchester. Yet, this spatiality also deconstructs the authentic experience and positive energy of hip-hop dance.

The close reading of the b-boy performance in Hamburg's city centre has therefore captured the way in which Hamburg's b-boys remain faithful to the dance form's spatiality, while presenting the audience with a multicultural 'thirdspace' experience of Hamburg. This multiculturality is reflected in the dancers' physical appearance, for

dance is strongly linked to the body of the artist. Ethnic differences therefore remain visible throughout hip-hop dance performances. At the same time, hip-hop dancers' engagement in this art form, especially at international battles, aims at participating in a mono-national discourse by representing their city or country. In this sense, hip-hop dancers institute a cultural concept of Germanness, which includes cultural hybridity and which attempts to de-stigmatise visible or aural 'otherness' into becoming a 'normal' German attribute.

While this identity concept seems to be accepted within hip-hop circles, the global adaptation of hip-hop dance, however, makes local performances in Hamburg difficult to read as an expression of Germanness for the wider public. Furthermore, while the German language is not needed as a form of communication amongst hip-hop dancers, it is required to connect as a meaningful German practice to an audience. This highlights hip-hop dance's weak link to the German language compared to the performances and practices of hip-hop's music making processes and reveals another problematic of the hybrid dancer, and in this case, of the kinaesthetic expression of a post-hybrid identity.

Nevertheless, the mentality and attitude fostered by the art form has provided tools with which SonnyTee and Can, for example, want to improve social exchange and an understanding of cultural differences in Hamburg. Can thus concludes that his goal as a hip-hop dancer is

> den Austausch zu stärken. Zwischen den Leuten, die hier in Hamburg leben. Und einfach vielleicht auch mal so ein bisschen die Tänzerszene an sich zu verändern. Also auch damit quasi die Gesellschaft ein bisschen zu verändern, [...] im Umgang mit anderen Leuten. Zum Beispiel so Werte wie Respekt. Toleranz. Und Freundlichkeit![420]

Whether the same aims can be achieved with hip-hop's lyrical element will be explored in the following chapter.

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[420] Can, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

4 Rap

4.1 Rhyme Technicians and the Emergence of Rap

> When I started out as a DJ, MC-in' as an art hadn't been formulated yet. The microphone was just used for makin' announcements, like when the next party was gonna be, or people's moms would come to the party lookin' for them, and you would have to announce it on the mike.[421]

The statement by Bronx' DJ Grandmaster Caz hints at the fact that the emergence of hip-hop's lyrical element is just as indebted to the DJ and his neighbourhood parties as b-boying. While b-boys and b-girls initially danced to the musical break beats played by the DJ, over time the DJ's ambidextrous turntable skills became more sophisticated beyond the basic invention of 'looping' and 'scratching.' Consequentially, the party audience became focussed on watching the DJ's manual acrobatics rather than moving to his beats.[422] In order to counteract this development, a new element was introduced at the DJ parties. Party hosts or 'masters of ceremony' (MCs) went on stage and 'filled a void – one created by the DJs – by bringing vocals and songs back into the spotlight.'[423] These MCs specifically connected to the audience in a way that was meaningful to them, namely by relying on the shared 'thirdspace' experience of living in the Bronx, and by shouting 'little phrases and words from the neighbourhood that [they] used on the corner.'[424]

The successful addition of MCing eventually resulted in new crew formations consisting of the DJ and his hosts. This development can be compared to the previously mentioned local 'transition from gang-oriented affiliations (formed around their protection of turf) to music and break-dance affiliations that maintained and in some cases intensified the important structuring systems of territoriality.'[425] Within these crew formations it was DJ Grandmaster Flash and 'The Furious Five' who became particularly influential for the establishment of hip-hop's lyrical element. Aside from shouting common phrases and words, Flash remembers that

> Cowboy came up with a lot of phrases and had a powerful voice that just commanded action. 'Throw your hands in the air!' 'Clap to the beat!' 'Somebody scream!' all came from Cowboy. Kid Creole and his brother Melle Mel were the first to really flow and have a poetic feel to their rhymes. They were the first rhyme technicians. They were the first to toss a sentence back and forth. Kid would say, 'I', Mel would say 'was', Kid would say 'walking', Mel

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[421] Grandmaster Caz in Katz, *Groove Music,* p. 73.
[422] Katz, *Groove Music*, p. 75.
[423] Ibid.
[424] DJ Kool Herc in George, 'The Founding Fathers Speak the Truth', p. 51.
[425] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 70.

> would say, 'down'. They just tossed sentences like that all day. It was incredible to watch, it was incredible to hear.[426]

While the audience animation thus began as an improvised practice of aural and visual entertainment, it eventually evolved into a 'form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music.'[427] This form of storytelling became known as 'rapping.'

From a cultural-historical perspective, Rose especially locates the art of rapping in an African-derived tradition. She bases her observation on a comparison of rap to the 'improvisational elements of jazz with the narrative sense of place in the blues; it has the oratory power of the black preacher and the emotional vulnerability of Southern soul music.'[428] Indeed, African-American preaching practices re-appear in the call-and-response tradition which was established at the DJ's block parties whereby the audience answered to the rappers' demands, such as to 'Say Ho! (Ho!), Say Hey, Ho! (Hey, Ho!) or 'I say Hip, you say Hop: Hip! (Hop!).'[429] Yet, beyond the African-American cultures that defined the Bronx's 'thirdspace,' rappers Melle Mel and The Kidd Creole were also of Cherokee descent again showing that the new element of rap continued to foster the 'multi-ethnic nature of the founding community of hip-hop.'[430] Nevertheless, similar to the DJ's fate, Ogbar again criticises that solely 'African American working-class, urban males emerged as the art's central representatives.'[431]

This specifically occurred when rap became detached from the performative stage of the DJ and the accompanying spatiality of the art form. Beyond rap's original performance as a live experience nurtured by the shared cultural knowledge and local traditions between the inhabitants of the Bronx, Rose highlights that it was also the socio-urban conditions of New York City's uptown boroughs which became influential for the 'shape and direction of rap,'[432] as rappers started rhyming about 'the pleasures *and* problems of black urban life in contemporary America.'[433] The movement towards this lyrical re-orientation was again initiated by DJ Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five with the release of their track 'The Message' in 1982.

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[426] DJ Grandmaster Flash in George, 'The Founding Fathers Speak the Truth', p. 51.
[427] Rose, p. 2.
[428] Ibid., pp. 184/5.
[429] Cf. Güler Saied, p. 30.
[430] Ogbar, p. 39.
[431] Ibid.
[432] Rose, p. 35.
[433] Ibid., p. 2; my emphasis.

Understood as an 'unmitigated and "authentic" portrayal of contemporary black urban life'[434] Furious Five member Melle Mel lyrically portrayed the 'fate of the individual spirit living within the parameters of the post-industrial urban landscape.'[435] Captured in the chorus, Melle Mel warns the listeners:

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge.

I'm trying not to lose my head, ah huh-huh-huh.

It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder

How I keep from going under.[436]

With the city of New York becoming a metaphorical 'jungle' encapsulating the chaotic, claustrophobic and animalistic fight for survival in this particular 'firstspace,' this song initiated a new direction in rap that 'extended the genre's thematic boundaries, which up to this point had mostly been isolated in the conceptual loci of the party, night club, or roller rink.'[437] Rap became a lyrical art form which no longer narrated *in* particular urban spaces but *about* particular urban spaces, namely about 'stories that represent the creative fantasies, perspectives, and experiences of racial marginality in America.'[438] Moreover, Forman highlights that while 'The Message' established a rap subgenre known as message, knowledge or reality rap 'all subsequent rap recordings dealing with sociopolitical concerns or spatial oriented themes relating to black cultural frames of experience owe a debt to "The Message".'[439]

In terms of spatiality, rap was now an art form which was able to sustain itself with a 'secondspace' perspective on the city where the 'cityspace becomes more of a mental or ideational field.'[440] Rappers went from being live entertainers into becoming 'producers of representational space and fictional narratives envisioned within actual environments and experiences'.[441] Consequentially, rappers further shifted from outdoor urban spaces into indoor recording studios, similar to the spatial transition of DJs who created beats for music production purposes. The paradox of this spatial shift, however, is highlighted by Forman who states that while rap's content became further connected to street life, 'the music was actually moving away from the production and

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[434] Neal, Mark Anthony, 'Post-industrial Soul: Black Popular Music at the Crossroads', in Forman and Neal, eds., *That's the Joint!*, 2nd edn, pp. 476-502 (p. 486).
[435] Ibid.
[436] Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, *The Message* (Sugar Hill Records, 1982), CD.
[437] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 83.
[438] Rose, p. 3.
[439] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 83.
[440] Soja, *Postmetropolis,* p. 11.
[441] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 93.

performance domains of the street at the time, and merging more consistently with the studios and executive spaces of the music industry.'[442]

Nevertheless, rappers maintained a link between the authentic practice of rap and its 'combined elements of geocultural and temporal locatedness'[443] by implying 'an intimate familiarity with the urban, working-class landscapes that gave rise to hip-hop in the 1970s.'[444] Hence, despite the transition of the art form's focus from being a 'thirdspace' experience to a 'secondspatial' reflection of a local cityspace, the spatiality of rap lyrics remained intrinsically based on the social components that characterised the 'thirdspace' of the Bronx. In so doing, Forman concludes that the commercial success of 'The Message' 'shifted the rap form toward an incisive critical content, introducing what eventually became a standard and dominating rap discourse that maintained a pronounced ghettocentric sensibility.'[445]

With recorded rap being able to disseminate easily via vinyl or airwaves, the notion of a ghettocentric sensibility rapidly spread to other national urban communities in the United States. The conditions of the Bronx remained paradigmatic for the overall conditions that defined the urban ghetto in its lyrical manifestation. Hence, specifically 'using the ghetto as a source of identity'[446] became the standardised urban 'secondspace' perspective and social discourse in commercial rap productions. More importantly, Forman emphasises that these lyrical and hence 'fictional representations cannot be segregated from real places and practices, for in their symbolic forms they are recirculated into the social realm, taken up, and made meaningful in collective contexts through sophisticated social engagements.'[447] By the early 1990s, this spatial representation and social engagement culminated in the emergence of rap's most successful commercial genre, namely gangsta rap.

While the aforementioned message rap genre can be understood as a conscious lyrical 'engagement with interrelated issues of race, class, and cultural identity,'[448] the new appearance of gangsta rap rather served to depict 'lifestyles of the young and edgy, replete with violent imagery of the steamy urban underside.'[449] Evolving in Los Angeles and its surrounding suburbs and counties, the descriptive imageries of the ghetto became the dominant 'secondspatial' discourse, whereby writing provocative lyrical stories about deviant social behaviours distorted rap's original emphasis on live

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[442] Ibid., p. 124.
[443] Ibid., p. 87.
[444] Ogbar, p. 39.
[445] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 83.
[446] Rose, p. 12.
[447] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 94.
[448] Ibid., p. 184.
[449] Ibid.

performance skills and on being an outlet to channel poetic creativity.[450] As Ogbar explains, a 'real' engagement in this lyrical art form was now being achieved by 'rappers who extol pathology (drug selling, gang banging, violence, pimping, etc)'.[451] Supporting this observation, Tickner points out that gangsta rap's

> validation of aggressiveness successfully tapped into prevalent stereotypes concerning everyday life in the ghetto, albeit with perverse effects. Besides upholding values such as hedonistic consumerism and patriarchy, which ultimately reconfirmed the existing social order [...], many rappers, to prove their 'realness,' became accustomed to carrying weapons, doing jail time, and participating in occasional fights and shoot-outs.[452]

In consequence, Ogbar claims that this realness has been 'racialized as an extension of being black or brown'[453] while Forman also notes that 'the ghetto is elevated as the source of black authenticity.'[454] Indeed, the domination of gangsta rap and its socio-spatial discourses caused 'commercial rappers to eagerly declare their "real nigga" status,'[455] meaning that these artists emphasised their 'tribal stigma' as a sign of ghetto-spatial authenticity. However, this status reveals a racial arbitrariness. While the first chapter touched upon black DJs being of Latino background, hip-hop scholar Samy H Alim claims that the term 'nigga' is also 'used by females of all ethnicities in the San Francisco Bay Area to refer to each other in much the same way that males do.'[456] Moreover, with rap being hip-hop's *lyrical* element expressed in spoken language, its recorded state does not require a physical performance nor the rapper's (black) body to communicate a 'nigga status.' Rather, rappers symbolise their 'tribal stigma' by articulating themselves in African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) and 'ever-changing black slang'[457] which identifies them as 'members of the lower social class who quite noticeably bear the mark of their status in their speech' (STGM: 146).

Yet, even these linguistic social signifiers can become arbitrary, revealing the constructed racial authenticity of gangsta rap. While regional differentiations and dialects across black communities in the United States already have varying effects on the particular uses of AAVE,[458] US-American Latino rappers, such as the members of Cypress Hill, have also adapted AAVE pronunciation in their lyrical delivery. In so

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[450] For an in-depth account of commercial gangsta rap's controversial influence on the image of hip-hop in the United States and beyond see Rose, Tricia, *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk about When We Talk about Hip Hop – and Why It Matters* (New York: BasicCivitas, 2008).
[451] Ogbar, p. 42.
[452] Tickner, pp. 124/5.
[453] Ogbar, pp. 65/6.
[454] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 94.
[455] Ogbar, p. 45.
[456] Alim, Samy H, *Roc the MIC Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 78.
[457] Rose, p. 3.
[458] Alim, p. 78.

doing, Ogbar claims that Cypress Hill's 'adoption of disparate cultural markers represents the group's attempt to affirm authenticity by conforming to popular notions of gangsta culture and "representing" their hood while adhering to the larger hegemonic forces in society that demand pan-Latinoism.'[459] Hence, despite the language variety's common understanding as being an inherent expression of African-American ethnicity, Cypress Hill represent rap's 'uncanny ability to absorb disparate styles while adhering to a definable and palpable hip-hop aesthetic.'[460]

Beyond gangsta rap's prevailing dominant influence on the art form's norms and practices, it should be noted that other rap styles and narratives have been established, as well. Forman explains that the 'aesthetic diversification contributed to a need for the genre distinctions [...] that were eventually implemented by the industry to identify the proliferation of new styles. These genre labels (knowledge rap, gangsta rap, reality rap, pop rap, etc) were eventually standardized in industry discourses and the media'.[461] Within these genre labels, AAVE has nevertheless remained the 'lingua franca' which has been 'used/borrowed and adapted/transformed by various ethnic groups inside and outside the U.S.'[462] Hence, in order to examine rap beyond its commerciality where certain perspectives of spatiality, sociality and historicality have become the marketable status quo, rap's overall lyrical power needs to be the central focus of analysis. In order to do so, the following section will highlight four lyrical features which capture rap's aesthetic norms and lyrical practices regardless of its historical, spatial or social setting.

4.2 Reading the Orality of Rap as a Lyrical Text

Close readings of rap lyrics in this analysis will treat the art form as an oral tradition, and hence as a tradition that transfers knowledge through speech in contrast to literate cultures which employ the written word as the primary form of communication.[463] Having said this, Rose defends rap as being directly influenced by African-derived oral

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[459] Ogbar, p. 47.

[460] Ibid., p. 53. For a contemporary detailed account of Chicano rappers' negotiation of their Latinidad and 'real nigga status' see Martinez-Morrison, Amanda, 'Black and Tan Realities: Chicanos in the Borderlands of the Hip-Hop Nation', in Dennis, Christopher, ed., 'The Voices of Latin/o American Hip-Hop', *alter/nativas: Latin American Cultural Studies Journal*, 2 (Spring 2014), <http://alternativas.osu.edu/en/issues/spring-2014/essays1/martinez-morrison.html> [accessed 17 August 2014].

[461] Forman, The *'hood Comes First*, p. 165.

[462] Alim, p. 71.

[463] Rappe, Michael, 'Rhythmus-Sound-Symbol: Struktur und Vermittlungsformen einer Oral Culture am Beispiel des Hip-Hop', in Kimminich, Eva, Michael Rappe, Heinz Geuen, and Stefan Pfänder, eds., *Expressyourself! Europas kulturelle Kreativität zwischen Markt und Underground* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag), pp. 137-56 (p. 138).

traditions such as 'boasting, signifying, preaching, and earlier related black oral traditions.'[464] However, similar oral features have been identified in other cultural and historical contexts, as well. The competitive and improvised nature of vulgar rhyme duels, for example, has been characteristic of the Scottish medieval tradition of 'flyting' which can be compared to the African-American ritual act of 'playing the dozens.'[465] German hip-hop journalist Sascha Verlan moreover claims that any of rap's supposed African-derived oral characteristics are to be found in any European or Asian cultures.[466] Hence, while rap should be understood as being intrinsically linked to its emergence within the 'thirdspace' of the Bronx and therefore within an African-derived context, including its manifestation in Caribbean or Latino cultural backgrounds, there remains a flexibility for other oral traditions to be incorporated or paralleled with rap when inserted into other cultural contexts.

Within these different cultural contexts, the aesthetics of rap remain distinguishable from other poetic art forms by delivering rhymes in synchronisation with a musical beat. With a rapper's performance being defined and judged on his 'verbal mastery, mastery of delivery, creativity, personal style, and virtuosity,'[467] this lyrical delivery is tied to a certain poetic feel called the 'flow.' According to Wu Tang Clan rapper Raekwon the flow does not refer to what you say, but '*how* you say it. Flow is like poetry goin to the beat.'[468] While the flow can therefore only be detected aurally, German linguists Androutsopoulos and Scholz have identified four common criteria for the analysis of rap lyrics which will guide the close readings of lyrical examples.[469]

The first category that Androutsopoulos and Scholz identify comprises *song themes* which simply refers to the topics of the rapped messages. The German linguists stress that the appearance and repetition of certain topics depends on the particular subgenre of rap as well as on national and cultural contexts whereby some topics become more relevant and meaningful than others. Androutsopoulos and Scholz summarise self-display, social critique, scene-specific discourse as well as more mundane themes on drugs, partying, love and sex as rap narratives' most iterated topics. The second category focusses on *ritualised speech acts*. This relates to the aforementioned practices

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[464] Rose, p. 25.

[465] Cf. Johnson, Simon, 'Rap Music Originated in Medieval Scottish Pubs, Claims American Professor', *The Telegraph* (Telegraph Media Group, 28 December 2008) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/3998862/Rap-music-originated-in-medieval-Scottish-pubs-claims-American-professor.html> [accessed 22 April 2012].

[466] Cf. Verlan, Sascha, 'HipHop als schöne Kunst betrachtet', in Androutsopoulos, ed., *HipHop – Globale Kultur, Lokale Praktiken,* pp. 138-46 (p. 141).

[467] Rose, p. 163.

[468] Raekwon in Alim, p. 95.

[469] Cf. Androutsopoulos, 'HipHop und Sprache: Vertikale Intertextualität und die drei Sphären der Popkultur', p. 116.

of boasting and toasting as well as dissing. It also comprises the act of (re)presenting one's self in a specific geo-historical setting. Thirdly, Androutsopoulos and Scholz categorise *rap specific rhetoric.* This refers to the use and appearance of metaphors, simile, cultural references, acronyms, as well as to the employment of homophonies and heterographs in rap lyrics. Lastly, *linguistic orientation* comprises the category in which rap lyrics are identified by their standardised and non-standardised linguistic appropriations as well as by the rapper's creative employment of different varieties and registers of language.

While Androutsopoulos employs the latter two categories for the investigation of global linguistic patterns in local rap lyrics,[470] this analysis will consider all four categories in order to identify their re-functioned signification in a linguistic and cultural context pertaining to Germany. By focussing on rap's appropriation in the hip-hop communities of Hamburg as well as of Oldenburg, the comparative analysis will further reveal how hip-hop's lyrical element has been authentically integrated into the cities' social, historical and spatial structures, revealing that its 'realness is never static, thus allowing for continued shifts of expression in politics and race.'[471]

4.3 The Adaptation of Rap in West Germany

> Für mich hat Hip-Hop einfach die deutsche Sprache für die Leute in Deutschland wieder normal gemacht, dass sie sich dafür nicht schämen müssen. Das es nämlich nicht ist, deutsch zu singen, oder wie man auch es immer mal nennen will, ist gleich Schlager. Oder deutsche Worte und Musik ist gleich Schlager.[472]

Mirko Machine emphasises that hip-hop's lyrical element triggered a proud identification with German popular music by arguing that *'Schlager'* was the only previous (and distasteful) popular German music genre. Yet, within Mirko Machine's comparison lies another discourse, one that touches upon a more complex and distorted relationship between popular music and the German language – a relationship that was normalised through the introduction of German rap.

The first official rap performance in German was aired on West German television in 1980, dating three years prior to the release of the first hip-hop films. This onetime spectacle was based on a parody of the internationally successful pop rap track 'Rapper's Delight' (1979). Enacted by GLS United comprising TV host Thomas Gottschalk and his colleagues Frank Laufenberg and Manfred Sexauer, their song

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[470] Cf. Ibid., pp. 116/7.
[471] Ogbar, p. 53.
[472] Mirko Machine, interviewed by author, 10 May 2012.

'Rapper's Deutsch,' however, remained insignificant for the establishment of rap as a lyrical art form in Germany.[473] Without mentioning either GLS United or a German rap scene, Sleepwalker remembers that 'für uns waren ja alle Vorbilder Engländer oder Amis.'[474] German youth who became interested in rap therefore expressed their affiliation to their role models by rapping in English, as well.[475]

This linguistic imitation was nevertheless deemed an authentic and valid cultural re-production of rap. The favouring of a foreign language over a familiar one in early German rap becomes apparent in the following statement by Oldenburg graffiti artist Moe. After having listened to German-Turkish rapper Kool Savas' first attempts at rapping in German in the early 1980s, Moe admits that his graffiti crew was

> begeistert von seinen Skills, also von seinen Fertigkeiten, aber fanden es unmöglich, dass er das auf Deutsch machte. Also es war wie so ein Tabubruch. Wir haben gesagt: ‚Alter! Lern Englisch! Mach das auf Englisch und du hast eine große Zukunft. Vergiss das mit dem Deutschen. Das ist scheiße. Es hört sich einfach kacke an.'[476]

While Moe's dogmatic perspective on rap's anglicised form of delivery relates to the fact that German youth 'kannten ja nur das!'[477] regarding their idols' *linguistic orientation*, Sabine von Dirke links the initial relevance inscribed in the English language to a wider German national discourse. According to Dirke, the popularity of US-American and English rap in Germany was especially based on the fact that it was performed *in English.* In so doing, rap denied

> German history, namely, that there was no untainted German folk traditions left after Nazism on which alternative popular music and youth culture could have been built. U.S. popular culture, especially those examples originating from African-American musical traditions, was the only valid tune that held the promise of liberation. In this context, the predominance of English within popular culture makes sense as a distancing device from the Nazi past.[478]

Moreover, the dis-identification with the German language expressed a denial in valuing anything German when one considers that 'it is in and through language that the values of places are produced.'[479] It thus comes hardly as a surprise that it took a

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[473] Cf. Loh, Hannes, and Sascha Verlan, 'die welle aus amerika spülte mich an land zurück', in *25 Jahre Hip-Hop in Deutschland* (Höfen: Hannibal, 2006), pp. 134-39 (p. 134).
[474] Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.
[475] Cf. Ibid.
[476] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[477] Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.
[478] Von Dirke, Sabine, 'Hip-Hop Made in Germany: From Old School to the Kanaksta Movement', in Mueller, Agnes C, ed., *German Popular Culture – How "American" is It?* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 96-112 (p. 99).
[479] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 30.

decade – and a united Germany – before rap in Germany began to emerge as a national music genre in the commercial sector.

The reason for this linguistic shift is twofold. On the one hand, German rappers' 'insufficient knowledge of English'[480] inhibited the achievement of lyrical sophistication. On the other hand, Dirke elaborates that the 'switch to German made sense since rap wants to communicate with its audience. The desire to be understood by the audience, in terms of conveying a message and showing off one's rhetorical skills, became the primary motivating factor.'[481] In line with the former observation, Hamburg freestyle rapper Stee, for example, became engaged in German rap specifically because of its familiar linguistic predisposition, explaining that 'als ich dann angefangen habe wirklich intensiver Musik zu hören, war mir einfach immer Inhalt wichtig. Und ich kann so schlecht Englisch *(laughs)*! Habe das alles nicht verstanden. Und deswegen höre ich auch hauptsächlich Deutschrap.'[482] In other words, rap's emphasis on verbal aesthetics and lyrical content had the ability to outweigh the historical semantics attached to the German language by re-signifying it as a contemporary symbol of Germanness.

In so doing, the messages conveyed in early German rap also began to iterate contemporary *song themes* relevant to the German social landscape. Most notably, Heidelberg rap trio Advanced Chemistry culturally translated *song themes* on social critique in their track 'Fremd im eigenen Land' (1993). Directing their message to a German audience, the German-Haitian rapper Torch, German-Italian rapper Toni L, and Afro-German rapper Linguist addressed national topics of racism, already proposing a 'multicultural type of "Germanness"'[483] as a strategy with which to manage their 'tribal stigmata' as German citizens with foreign cultural backgrounds.

In the same year, rap group Fresh Familee from Ratingen commented on the Turkish migration discourse in their track 'Ahmet Gündüz' (1993).[484] While Advanced Chemistry rapped exclusively from their personal points of view, Fresh Familee's lead German-Turkish rapper Tachiles alternates between rapping from the perspective of an imaginary Turkish *Gastarbeiter* named Ahmet Gündüz, and of the son of such a *Gastarbeiter*. In order to distinguish between these two viewpoints, Tachiles moreover

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480 Von Dirke, p. 102.
481 Ibid.
482 Stee, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.
483 Brown, Timothy S, '(African-)Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany', in Basu, Dipannita, and Sidney J Lemelle, eds., *The Vinyl ain't Final – Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Culture* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 137-50 (p. 142); for more information on the content and impact of 'Fremd im eigenen Land' in Germany see Güler Saied, pp. 62-73.
484 Cf. Güler Saied, p. 61.

engages in two different *linguistic orientations.* For the former account he employs exaggerated broken German grammar articulated in a Turkish accent, while for the latter account Tachiles expresses himself in standard German. In so doing, he strategically supports his lyrical semantics through bi-lingual performances with which to differentiate between first and second generation migrants in Germany.

Tachiles' *linguistic orientation* therefore relates to the latter reason for the German linguistic shift in German rap mentioned by Dirke, namely to the creative and playful employment of rhetorical skills. Indeed, early German rap became heavily judged by the rappers' use of 'vielsilbig, komplexe Reime, viele Wortspiele, geile Stimme, guter Flow. Also irgendeine rhythmische Basis, die einfach Sinn macht.'[485] Rappers thus began discovering the characteristics and linguistic possibilities of their German language by adhering to the same lyrical aesthetics that defined rap since its emergence in the Bronx. This is best captured by Rattos Locos Records label chef Blacky White's description of Samy Deluxe as being 'ein Typ der kann *echt* rappen. So. Das kann man schon messen mit dem Ami-Scheiß, bloß halt auf Deutsch. Der flowt, der kann langsam, schnell, *boom boom*, der geht ab! Der ist nicht neben dem Takt.'[486] The 'realness' of German rap therefore continued to be based on rhythm and the delivery of a lyrical flow. Yet, while German became re-discovered as a viable and valued language for the production of German popular music, its use did not transmit the same social discourse as expressed by the German rappers' US-American or English role models.

While African-American and Latino rappers denoted their socio-racial identity through their rhetoric in the form of AAVE and black slang, Samy Deluxe explains that 'am Anfang war es schon noch so ein bisschen, [dass] man erwartet dass du jedenfalls „vernünftiges," in Anführungszeichen, deutsch sprichst als Deutschrapper.'[487] Hence, despite the fact that *song themes* written by culturally 'foreign' rappers touched upon internal socio-political topics of racism and ethnic segregation, Samy Deluxe elaborates that 'die ersten türkischen Rapper, [die] so auf Deutsch [gerappt haben] waren so Boulevard Bou aus Heidelberg, der eben so *mega* eloquent und eigentlich total der Deutsche ist.'[488] Indeed, even Cheesman notes in his analysis on Tachiles' German lyrics that the rapper 'exemplifies a delight in linguistic play which characterizes the best contemporary German rap. And this kind of text conveys at least as effectively as any explicit message that "typical Turks", regardless of their legal status, are full participants in contemporary German culture.'[489] In other words, German rap did not

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[485] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
[486] Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.
[487] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 213

become symbolic of a lower social class, since German rappers' 'tribal stigmata' were silenced through their enunciation of 'proper' German.

A reason for the lack of this symbolic translation can be deduced by comparing the spatiality of US-American rap *song themes* to German ones, with Oldenburg rapper K-Four explaining that

> we don't have no ghetto in Germany, man. Everybody gets money from the welfare [...] We've got a social net. [...] So, you cannot talk about a ghetto like: 'it's necessary for me to hustle to survive.' You might be that greedy like 'I'm not satisfied with this 300 euros or whatever they give me. I want more. That is why I sell drugs.' You might say *that*. But it's *not* necessary for you to survive. So. It's just one sort of luxury. Gangster by choice![490]

While K-Four touches upon lyrical content rather than on linguistic signifiers, the fact that ghettoes are said to be non-existent in Germany implies that they do not become urban spaces with a specific social and racial discourse representable in German rap. This, however, does not mean that different urban spaces were irrelevant in German rap. Instead of reflecting their social perspective through language, rappers' linguistic distinctions related to their regional geography.

The flexibility of this spatial re-orientation in rap's linguistic semantics becomes ironically evident with the example of Frankfurt-born rapper D-Flame. While initially claiming '*wenn* jemand auf Englisch rappen darf, dann wohl ich! Wenn ich irgendwie da [in den USA] auch Wurzeln hab' und nicht irgend 'nen Peter Schmidt',[491] D-Flame's German identity became challenged as his producers insisted: '„Du darfst nicht zu viel Hessisch reden, das kommt nicht an! Also du musst mit i*ch*, di*ch*, mi*ch* [rappen]."'[492] With D-Flame clarifying that 'in Frankfurt da gibt's ja kein C.H. Da sagt man i*sch*, d*isch*, mi*sch*,'[493] the 'stigma' of his Germanness was not linked to his dark skin, nor to his Polish-Caribbean ethnicity but to his regional German dialect. While regional dialects have featured most prominently in German folk music and in *volkstümliche Musik*, German rap altered the relationship between regional dialects and folk traditions by allowing these forms of speech to be attractive and approved as a statement of contemporary German urban lifestyles. Remembering a rap recording session with Jan Delay in Hamburg, D-Flame recounts listening to his verses, exclaiming

> ‚Nee! Oh! Zu viele S.C.H. wieder! Zu viele S.C.H.! Lass uns noch mal aufnehmen. [...] Ich will diese *chh-chhh* mehr.' Und er [Jan Delay] so: ‚Nein! Das bist du dann nicht mehr! Wie du redest, so will ich das auch gehört haben auf dem

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490 K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
491 D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012. As previously mentioned, D-Flame's father was a US-American citizen of Jamaican and Cherokee-Indian descent.
492 Ibid.
493 Ibid.

> Song!' So. Und ich so: ‚Hä? In Frankfurt sagen die mir die ganze Zeit in Hamburg fährt keiner drauf ab, wenn ich dieses Frankfurterische...' Er so: ‚Nee! Genau darauf fahren Leute ab, die aus anderen Städten kommen!'[494]

Thus, the language use in early German rap did not only represent social or racial discourses but geo-cultural ones, as well. This linguistic perspective on spatial representations will be further explored in the following analyses.

4.4 Hamburg and the Metropolitan Performances of German Rap

Rap in Hamburg began as a live art form, similar to its original performance and 'thirdspace' experience in the Bronx. However, as rappers in West Germany lacked the shared conditions concerning sociality, spatiality and historicality that framed US-American rap, the performances of rap in Germany became re-located from the outside, public neighbourhood blocks into indoor and private 'firstspaces.'

One popular local rap location, for instance, was a basement in Hamburg's district of *Eimsbüttel*. Here, the art of 'freestyling' was practiced which describes the creation of improvised rhymes over an instrumental beat. The practice of this rap tradition transformed the local, underground 'firstspace' into 'eine Kreativschmiede des Grauens'[495] as 'die Sprachbegeisterteren unter uns'[496] exchanged and perfected their rhetorical skills. The relevance of this particular 'thirdspace' experience for Hamburg's rap community is emphasised by Samy Deluxe who writes that the basement became the 'Heimat des Hip Hop aus Hamburg, dem Epizentrum des Labels, des Clans, der Familie namens 'Eimsbush Entertainment'.[497] Characterised as Hamburg rap's epicentre, the basement also became a hybrid space as the name 'Eimsbush' fused the the name of its German 'firstspace' location with the idealised hip-hop identity of the New York City borough Flatbush[498] into a cultural 'third space' pertaining to local hip-hop.

A similar spatial adaptation of rap was also unfolding in the south of Hamburg. Freestyle rapper Nan-D recalls the scheduled 'Mittwochstreffen, die fünf Jahre in meinem Keller mit Schlechta Umgang stattfanden, um zu üben.'[499] Nowadays, Nan-D

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494 D-Flame, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.
495 DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.
496 Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
497 Sorge, Samy, *Dis wo ich herkomm* (Reinbeck: Rohwolt Verlag, 2009), p. 81.
498 Many commercially successful rappers were from Flatbush, including Talib Kweli and Busta Rhymes; cf. Young, Jennifer R, 'Brooklyn Beats: Hip Hop's Home to Everyone from Everywhere', in Hess, Mickey, ed., *Hip Hop in America: A Regional Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2010), pp. 75-106.
499 Nan-D, email to author, 4 July 2012.

and the members of Schlechta Umgang have relocated their domestic freestyle sessions into a local club. Sharing the same district as the DJ orchestra's *Lab,* the move into Hamburg's *Schanzenviertel* has allowed the practice of rap to remain a live 'thirdspace' experience and even 'umsonst und für jeden zugänglich.'[500] Furthermore, Nan-D emphasises that 'bei uns regiert der Conscious Rap'[501] which describes anti-commercial rap that delivers 'positive, uplifting messages, often delivered over smooth, ear-grabbing beats.'[502] While Schlechta Umgang has therefore remained commercially underground, Eimsbush chose a different path.

By 1994, the local basement meetings at Eimsbush led to the establishment of the aforementioned rap label 'Eimsbush Entertainment'[503] – coinciding with the time in which German rap became normalised as a German form of expression. While rappers were indeed improving their rhetorical skills, Samy Deluxe regards Eimbush's commercial evolution as being inextricably linked to Hamburg's urban conditions and hence to forces beyond mere lyrical talent. The existing structures and establishments of professional music businesses provided the local rappers with 'direkte Vorbilder nicht nur zum Hören, sondern mit denen wir reden konnten.'[504] Hence, despite rap being a newly evolving German music genre, the artists could rely on previous local knowledge regarding the commercial circulation of music. Samy Deluxe specifically contrasts this aspect to other German cityspaces, explaining that

> das hatten Leute in anderen Städten teilweise einfach nicht gehabt und das ist auch nicht so ein Vorwurf deshalb oder so ein Ding deswegen sind wir Hamburger geiler, aber es war irgendwas, was einfach kulturell hier schon verankert war. Das war so ein Nährboden auf dem einfach *independent* Musik wachsen konnte und sich aufbauen konnte.[505]

Over time, the professional as well as spatial conditions of Hamburg allowed local rap to flourish in various directions which, according to Blacky White, nowadays include the 'Street Ding. Dann gibt es andere Crews, die richtig auf *gangsta rapper* machen. Dann gibt es halt so Freestyletypen. Und verschiedene Intentionen. Die einen wollen irgendwie Echo[506] und *100-million-dollars*. Die anderen wollen einfach nur rappen und Spaß haben.'[507]

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[500] Ibid.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Adaso, Henry, 'What is Conscious Rap?', *Rap/Hip-Hop* (About.com, n.d.) <http://rap.about.com/od/genresstyles/p/ConsciousRap.htm> [accessed 30 October 2013].
[503] Rappers and DJs who were members or affiliates of Eimsbush Entertainment featuring in this thesis include Samy Deluxe, Jan Delay, D-Flame, Das Bo and DJ Ben Kenobi.
[504] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
[505] Ibid.
[506] The *Echo* is Germany's official music award.
[507] Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.

Within all these variations, rappers still engage in social, spatial and historical discourses particular to their intentions. Thus, Sleepwalker remembers that

> früher konnte man noch über sich selber Witze machen und all so einen Schnick Schnack. [Man] hat das noch mit mehr Humor genommen. Man muss auch sagen natürlich war der Hip-Hop damals, gerade der Hamburger [war] mehr in so einer Wohnzimmerlaune. [Rap] ist aus dem Wohnzimmer entstanden, sage ich mal, oder aus dem Keller.[508]

He further contrasts this spatially-related mood and style to other rap traditions, explaining that 'wenn der Rap von der Straße kommt, natürlich ist er auch aggressiver.'[509] Hence, the 'firstspace' in which rap is practiced, or the imagined 'secondspace' the rapper seeks to represent, influences rap's lyrical sound. This observation echoes Forman's previous statement on the 'undeniable effect of spatial variation that facilitates or encourages different practices within each separate domain.'[510] In Hamburg, rap's spatial variation and its accompanying practices have established themselves in three spatial, or rather geographic categories. These comprise urban, regional and national narratives, which are all based from within the cityspace of Hamburg and which despite their different spatiality all serve to affirm a local German identity. Hence, in order to frame their lyrical messages according to their intentions and purposes, rap artists have engaged in different social, spatial and historical perspectives on Hamburg.

While already having touched upon the regional differentiations in early German rap represented through a regionally-defined *linguistic orientation*, Gizmo describes the locals of Hamburg as having 'schon einen krassen Hamburger Schnack!'[511] *Schnack* refers to a particular humerous utterance which imitates the sound of low German. DJ Ben Kenobi specifies that 'mit bestimmten Leuten redet man so, wenn du erst mal auf den Pegel gehst.'[512] This situational appearance of Hamburg's characteristic form of informal communication is iterated by Hamburg rapper CB who explains that whenever 'irgendeiner auf einmal auf voll betrunken Platt schnackt ist es derbe *nice.*'[513] CB's mentioning of *'Platt'* in the context of the Hamburg *Schnack* moreover serves to frame the historical side of this type of local communication.

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[508] Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012.
[509] Ibid.
[510] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 109.
[511] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 17 July 2012.
[512] Gizmo and DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 17 July 2012.
[513] CB, interviewed by author, 24 August 2012.

With the regional language of low German, *Plattdeutsch,* becoming nearly extinct by the 18th century,[514] it nowadays remains mostly as a pseudo-regional dialect, namely as fixed expressions or utterances whereby standard German is pronounced with a low German accent. CB explains that 'man versucht halt so alte Sachen mitzunehmen, so von unseren Eltern oder von unseren Opas'[515] when speaking in this manner which highlights the contemporary generation's attempts in retaining knowledge of this regional language and hence of this local identity. In this sense, the contemporary appropriation of *Platt* as a regional symbol and the use of a humorous *Schnack* have become local signs of Hamburg, and further appropriated in local German rap productions, as well.

In 1995, rap trio Fettes Brot made use of this regional linguistic identity in their party rap track 'Nordish by Nature.'[516] While the title already hints at a northern geography, it is also an allusion to the African-American rap trio Naughty by Nature. By keeping the n-assonance and hence the link to hip-hop culture intact, the substituted word '*Nordish*' rather serves to define an imaginative pan-northern European identity as touched upon in the previous chapter on hip-hop dance. In this case, the widely encompassing identity category is reflected through the inclusion of multiple Nordic languages in the rap track. The song's *linguistic orientation* therefore includes Danish and Dutch rapped by international colleagues, aside from low German and standard German verses rapped by Fettes Brot and Der Tobi & Das Bo. However, the radio edited version as well as the video clip to 'Nordish by Nature' only feature Der Tobi & Das Bo as additional rappers, omitting the Danish and Dutch lyrics.[517] This does not distort the message of the song for the track begins in low German, immediately communicating its regional identity to the listener. A close reading of this first stanza will highlight the way Fettes Brot engage in spatial, historical and social discourses in order to represent Hamburg's regional identity through hip-hop's norms and practices.

After an aural introduction consisting of sampled seagull sounds and ocean waves which sonically infer Hamburg's maritime geography over the first bars of the beat, Fettes Brot member Schiffmeister initiates the song by counting:

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514 Cf. Langer, Nils, 'Low German', in Deumert, Ana, and Wim Vandenbussche, eds., *Germanic Standardizations – From Past to Present* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., 2003), pp. 282-302 (p. 285 and p. 292).

515 CB, interviewed by author, 24 August 2012.

516 Since 2009, rap trio De Fofftig Pens from Bremen have been exclusively rapping in low German, albeit in a regional dialect pertaining to Hamburg's neighbouring city-state. Their name is furthermore a parodic allusion to US-American gangsta rapper 50Cent, engaging in a similar hybridised hip-hop discourse as Fettes Brot's song title 'Nordish by Nature.'

517 For a detailed close reading of the video clip to 'Nordish by Nature' see Friedrich and Klein, *Is this real?*, pp. 117-19.

Een, twej, een, twej, drej.

Sech mol: ‚Hey' [Hey!], sech mol: ‚Hoo' [Hoo!]

Dat is Fettes Brot op Platt inne Disco.

Jo, ick bün de Jung achtern Plattenspeeler.

Un so deel ick op as Störtebeker sine Likedeeler.

Dor is for jeden wat dorbi, wat ik speel.

Bi uns in Norden heet dat nich ‚Disco,' sondern ‚Dans op de Deel.'

Ik krakehl veel Platt in dat Mikrofon.

Büst nich unt'n Norden is dat schwer to verstohn.

Wohn' anne Waterkant, dohn wi all.

Un da schnackt man nu ma so.

Hör mal 'n beeten to.

‚Hummel Hummel' [‚Mors! Mors!'].[518]

While adhering to the same sentence structure as standard German, Schiffmeister's attempt at low German does first of all not evolve organically but becomes a word-by-word translation of standard German. The 'lowness' becomes identifiable through his choice of vocabulary, as well as through phonetics, such as the lack of diphthongs, the harshly sounding alveolar vibrant [r] and the sharp [s] preceding a [t] or a [p]. Through this pseudo *linguistic orientation,* which nevertheless symbolically communicates a regional identity, Schiffmeister precedes to address his imagined audience through the employment of *rap specific rhetoric* in the form of the traditional hey/ho call-and-response pattern in the first couplet.

In the second couplet, Schiffmeister broadens the cultural references pertaining to a hip-hop discourse by mentioning his *Plattenspeeler*. Metaphorically standing behind his turntables, Schiffmeister engages in rap's *ritualised speech acts* by boasting about his diverse musical selection. In so doing, Schiffmeister compares his musical situation to the *Likedeeler*, the brotherhood of pirate leader and local legend Störtebeker: just as the *Likedeeler* distributed their share of stolen goods equally amongst themselves, so is DJ Schiffmeister able to cover all musical tastes of his audience members. From the rhetorical use of a simile to the geographical relocation of hip-hop DJ parties in northern Germany, Schiffmeister further emphasises that partying in his maritime region *'anne Waterkant'* is called *'Dans op de Deel.'* Incidentally, *Dans op de Deel* was also the name of a regional television programme during the time in which this rap

[518] Fettes Brot, *Nordish by Nature* (Alternation (2), 1995), maxi-single, CD.

song was released. The programme specifically featured low German folk music, with the name of this programme becoming a common synonym for regional music and identity.

By the end of the verse, Schiffmeister engages in another local discourse by re-functioning the oral tradition of the call-and-response *'Hummel, Hummel – Mors, Mors'* from being a local greeting tradition into becoming a *ritualised speech act* of rap. The verbal exchange rests on the story in which a water carrier by the name of Hans Hummel supplied water to Hamburg's inhabitants living further away from the resources. In so doing, he became frequently harassed by children who yelled *'Hummel, Hummel.'* Not being able to react under the heavy weight of the water buckets resting over his shoulders, Hans Hummel merely reacted by replying *'Mors, Mors*,'[519] meaning 'arse arse', presumably in terms of the colloquial expression: 'Ihr könnt mich mal am Arsch lecken!' Thus, the appearance of this call-and-response tradition in a rap track exclusively rests on the audience's awareness of how to respond 'correctly' to this call.

The entire excerpt of this verse therefore only becomes meaningful through access to northern German cultural knowledge, as well as through insights into rap's norms and practices. Schiffmeister creates a lyrical 'third space' in which knowledge of hip-hop culture *and* of Hamburg is dependent of each other in order for the *song theme* to resonate meaningfully amongst the audience. From a spatial perspective, Schiffmeister represents Hamburg's regional maritime 'secondspace' through a historical linguistic discourse with low German also having been the official language of the hanseatic league.[520] The *linguistic orientation* of the rap track therefore captures a regional identity, which is inextricably linked to the city of Hamburg. With *Platt* appearing more commonly in contemporary contexts of inebriated and entertaining occasions, the *song theme* moreover suitably mirrors the everyday expression of this local language which at the same time continues to treat rap as an oral tradition. Together with the culturally ambivalent incorporation of *ritual speech acts,* Schiffmeister succeeds in drawing upon discourses concerning spatiality as well as historicality in order to embed rap in a regional narrative.

Yet another 'third space' opens up in terms of the song's social perspective. While the remaining rap parts comprising 'Nordish by Nature' are performed in standard German by the other members of Fettes Brot, as well as by Tobi and Das Bo, the latter rapper challenges the Nordic category by being of Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnicity. Similar to the members of hip-hop dance crew 'Nordish by Nature,' Das Bo's identification with and representation of this northern Germanness 'contests genealogies of "origin" that

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[519] Amrine, Douglas, *Hamburg* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2012), p. 67.
[520] Cf. Langer, pp. 285-88.

lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority' (LOC: 225). In this particular rap context, Das Bo manages his 'stigma' of foreignness by demonstrating that having a different ethnic heritage is irrelevant for identifying with a transnational (Nordic) region. Moreover, as Hamburg DJ Vito recounts, the presence of Das Bo at freestyle sessions left his fellow Eimsbush rappers 'relativ angespannt, [weil er] diese Doppelreime oder so zweideutige Sachen schon damals rausgehauen hat.'[521] Hence, similar to Samy Deluxe's mentioning of Boulevard Bou's perfect mastering of the German language, Das Bo further shows that a foreign cultural background is insignificant for cultivating a sophisticated command of the German language.

Yet, whilst this light-hearted engagement in rap provided linguistic strategies with which to manage social and racial 'stigmata,' rap's commercial character slowly began to change by the turn of the millennium. Similar to the rise in popularity of US-America's West Coast gangsta rap, commercially oriented rappers in Germany began positioning their narratives in deviant urban spaces, as well.[522] Thus, despite K-Four as well as DJ Ben Kenobi claiming that rappers in the United States have 'ganz andere Probleme […], als die hier. So: „Hier ist das Ghetto." In Deutschland gibt es das in dem Sinne so nicht,'[523] rappers from Germany's capital presented a different perspective of their city.

With the establishment of rap label Aggro Berlin in 2001, Güler Saied explains that 'erst mit dem Erscheinen von Aggro Berlin ist unter Jugendlichen ein derartig hoher Identifikations- und Aneignungs-Boom entstanden, der die urbane Stadt beziehungsweise Stadtquartiere, in denen die Jugendlichen leben, als Hauptthema fokussiert.'[524] In other words, Aggro Berlin promoted German gangsta narratives with an emerging focus on outdoor urban 'firstspaces.' This new orientation was especially advanced through the success of rapper Sido and his neighbourhood-centred track 'Mein Block' (2004):

> Spätestens seit Sido's ‚Mein Block' ist das vermeintlich deutsche Ghetto in den Mainstream importiert worden. Danach folgten jede Menge weiterer Visualisierungen von Quartieren, die in der Politik sowie in der sozialen Arbeit ehemals als sozialer Brennpunkt und nun als Stadtteil mit besonderem Erneuerungsbedarf gelten. Der Anknüpfungspunkt an die lokalen Quartiere geht mit einem teilweise Zelebrieren und Glorifizierung dieser einher.[525]

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[521] DJ Vito, interviewed by author, 21 June 2012.

[522] German gangsta rap was not new in Germany, having already enjoyed success through hip-hop duo Rödelheim-Hartreim Projekt in the mid 1990s. Yet, this subgenre did not overshadow the German rap scene to the extent that gangsta rappers did after 2001.

[523] DJ Ben Kenobi, interviewed by author, 3 July 2012.

[524] Güler Saied, p. 108.

[525] Ibid., p. 81.

Hence, by shifting rap's narratives into 'firstspaces' which became framed as ghetto-centric 'secondspaces,' rappers began to address the fact that German cityspaces 'generier[en] nicht nur Innovationen, Kreativität, wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, [sie] bring[en] auch zusätzlich Hierarchien, Ungleichheit, soziale Polarisierung und Ungerechtigkeit hervor.'[526] Consequentially, this spatial perspective influenced German rap's social discourse, for Samy Deluxe explains that 'das soziale Spektrum ist aufgegangen. Es ist noch weniger Mittelstand und *(incomprehensible)* jetzt auch irgendwie eine offizielle Sprache für die Unterschicht nicht nur zu konsumieren, sondern jeder kann es sich irgendwie zutrauen.'[527] In other words, newly emerging German gangsta rappers represented their socially fragmented urban lifestyle by linguistically reflecting this fragmentation through broken grammar and a 'Straßen*über*slang, der eigentlich nicht eindeutig deutsch für jeden ist.'[528] Yet, in contrast to the relationship between the urban ghetto and the 'real nigga status,' which had been nurtured in US-American gangsta rap, the German ghetto did not automatically become a racial extension of belonging to an ethnic minority. With Sido being an ethnic German rapper, the gangsta rappers' *linguistic orientation* was rather a means to add socio-economic authenticity to their *song themes* and to distinguish their narratives from previous German rap, while the overall German rap community remained as multicultural as it was since the 1980s.

While the wave of commercial gangsta rap thus flourished in Berlin, its impact and commercial success was felt in Hamburg, as well. Here, however, this new subgenre of rap opened up a commercial niche for local street rappers.[529] Hamburg's rap community had been mostly identified through its *'Wohnzimmerlaune,'* yet by 2008 a different perspective on the northern German metropolis was emerging. This was primarily initiated through the rap label Rattos Locos Records.[530] The Germanised Spanish name serves to personify the rappers who are signed under this label as dirty urban creatures repulsed by the dominant society due to the specific urban spaces they inhabit. At the same time, Rattos Locos identify with the cleverness of rats as they learn to survive regardless of the attempts to eliminate them.[531] The direction of rap promoted by the label therefore adheres to the street as a 'marketing utility that was alternately derogatory and romantic [while] in the minds of many rap artists "the

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[526] Soja, 'Vom „Zeitgeist" zum „Raumgeist"', p. 242.
[527] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.
[528] Ibid.
[529] While street rap was always practised in Hamburg, the local rap image of the city did not reflect this subgenre but rather solely represented the living room rap movement. Cf. Sleepwalker, interviewed by author, 5 June 2012; cf. Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2014.
[530] Cf. Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2014.
[531] Cf. Ibid.

street" became the official source of the music's authenticity and cultural value.'[532] By not engaging in a lyrical glorification of deviant social behaviours, which are central to gangsta rap narratives, Nate57 explains that Hamburg's local street rappers aim to become the commercial voice for those inhabitants 'die auf jeden Fall eine andere Sicht auf die Welt haben, als wenn es dir finanziell gut geht, glaub ich so. Ja und das will ich den Leuten erklären. Einfach *unsere* Welt erklären!'[533]

Nate57 previously explained in Chapter 2 that his music reflects Hamburg's socio-spatial history by creating his beats through the same approach with which past local pirates collected knowledge and insights on different cultures. In a similar context, this identification with pirates has also come to define Rattos Locos' adaptation of rap. Member Telly Tellz, for instance, states that

> diese Störtebeker Mentalität, damit kann ich mich identifizieren! [...] Seemänner sind offen für andere Kulturen in meinen Augen. Und das ist Seefahrt und das ist diese Piratenkultur! Damit kann ich mich identifizieren. Weil das sind Outlaws. Das sind Leute, die so eine Robin Hood Mentalität [haben]. Du kommst vielleicht von unten, aber du sorgst dafür, dass *die* von unten denen es besser geht.[534]

By referring to Störtebeker, Telly Tellz draws upon the same signifiers of locality as employed in the rap track 'Nordish by Nature.' However, Telly Tellz simultaneously re-frames this historical perspective in accordance with his intentions and his image as a contemporary street rapper pertaining to Hamburg's lower social class. He also shows how rappers are able to 'compose opposing narratives of the very same urban space; sometimes they use the same references and images for conflicting political purposes,'[535] as already observed by Stehle in her analysis on German gangsta rap. Thus, the juxtaposing appropriation of Hamburg's pirate legends, which has previously served to express a regional Nordic identity, is re-signified to represent Hamburg's urban outcast. More specifically, this urban outcast is located in the particular neighbourhood of St. Pauli. According to Blacky White, the reason for this specific urban identification is to show

> wo du herkommst. Und ich finde, dass es das auch in Deutschland gibt, aber es gab nicht immer so viele Viertel, die wirklich so *boom!* So wie Queens oder Brooklyn [...] Hier gab es Eimsbush. Im Aggro Berlin Zusammenhang gab es auch ein paar Viertel. Dieses Märkische Viertel oder so. Aber wir sind die St. Pauli *Hustler*.[536]

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[532] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 112.
[533] Nate57, interviewed by author, 21 August 2012.
[534] Telly Tellz, interviewed by author, 22 August 2012.
[535] Stehle, p. 4.
[536] Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.

In representing their 'hood,' Rattos Locos engage in rap's practice of being 'contextually linked to conditions in a city comprised of an amalgamation of neighbourhoods and boroughs with their own highly particularised social norms and cultural nuances.'[537] As St. Pauli is furthermore located in close geographic vicinity to the port, which justifies and authenticates the rappers' association with pirate mythology, it is also home to the city's red-light district, providing it with a particularly deviant 'secondspatial' identity beyond its multicultural nuances. By comparing St. Pauli to Queens or to Brooklyn, Blacky White moreover iterates Forman's observation, in which he states that '[a]lready fully acknowledged as the source of expanding hip-hop scene, New York was frequently cast as the backdrop or setting for much of the lyrical and thematic content'.[538] This acknowledgement becomes evident in Nate57's and Telly Tellz' track 'Nur die Starken überleben' (2010), which re-interprets the rap song 'Survival of the Fittest' (1995) by New York City's rap duo Mobb Deep.

With a title that addresses the constant competition and tension that defined the 'thirdspace' experience of living in Queens, Mobb Deep express their perspective on urban 'culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival' (LOC: 247). This is summarised in their hook *'we living this 'til the day that we die. Survival of the fit, only the strong survive.'*[539] The same 'thirdspace' experience is iterated by Nate57 who explains that growing up in St. Pauli 'macht einen *stark.'*[540] Thus, in contrast to the aforementioned indoor 'firstspaces,' which defined Hamburg's early rap sound and where Eimsbush eventually solely existed as a hybrid 'secondspace,' Rattos Locos treat their urban 'secondspace' as a reflection of the actual 'thirdspace' experience where 'the imagined geography tends to become the "real" geography, with the representation coming to define and order the reality' (THSP: 79). Employing Mobb Deep's original musical beat as an aural representation of Hamburg's urban reality, Nate57 initiates the track by inviting the listeners on a lyrical excursion of St. Pauli:

Komm, wir machen eine Tour durch die Gegend.

Neben Burger King siehst du wie die Huren da so stehen.

Vergebens!

Wenn ich unterwegs bin,

Sieht man nur Probleme.

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[537] Forman, '"Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music', p. 67.
[538] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 99.
[539] Mobb Deep, *Survival of the Fittest* (Loud Records, 1995), single, CD.
[540] Nate57, interviewed by author, 21 August 2012.

Viele schwach!

Mir kommen die Tränen.

Guck, Kunststudenten fragen mich immer nach Ot.

Ich bleibe lieber misstrauisch,

Vielleicht ist er ja ein Cop.[541]

The melancholic atmosphere that arises throughout Nate57's descriptive verses is embedded in impure rhyme patterns and in *rap specific rhetoric* that relies on words connoting sadness and desperation. This bleak socio-spatial ambience is further communicated in the accompanying video clip, which in black and white, manifests the rappers' 'sense of locale, visually representing the places of significance which they inhabit and delineating different social settings and different regions'.[542] As problems become visible when Nate57 is underway, these problems are especially located in the outside urban 'firstspace,' namely on the streets. His allusions to the regular use of recreational drugs and to the subsequent presence of undercover police in this area is moreover verbalised by rhyming the colloquial Turkish term for weed with the common Americanism for police officer. Such a hybrid *linguistic orientation* appears in Telly Tellz' following verse, as well. In imitating a conversation between a clerk and himself, he raps

Geh mal hier hin, geh mal da hin,

Hol das Papier für dein Parra.

Hol mal dies, hol mal das für Hartz IV.

Drei hundert im Monat?

Digga, woll'n die mich verarschen?[543]

By describing the iterative and unsatisfying process of bureaucracy, the second verse is created by a 'pa'-assonance constructed through the use of German and Turkish words. While *parra* signifies money in Turkish, it is the mentioning of the *Hartz VI* reform, the German state benefit of 300 euros per month that can be claimed by unemployed citizens, with which Telly Tellz specifically situates his rap narrative in a social discourse pertaining to a German context. While not describing his 'thirdspace' experience in spatial terms compared to Nate57, Telly Tellz' local affiliation nevertheless becomes apparent through his use of the term '*Digga*.' Understood as the

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[541] Nate57, 'Nur die Starken überleben', *Verrückte Ratten* (Rattos Locos Records, 2009), mixtape, online.

[542] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. 245.

[543] Telly Tellz, 'Nur die Starken überleben', *Verrückte Ratten* (Rattos Locos Records, 2009), mixtape, online.

German equivalent of 'mate' or 'dude,' this form of address is primarily heard in and associated with Hamburg. Its etymology is related to the German word *'Dicker.'* Pronounced with a Hamburg dialect, the velar stops of the [k] approximate the common sound of a [g]. By substituting the written suffix '-er' with an '-a' the word moreover parallels the spelling of 'nigga,' despite their etymological unrelatedness.

These two brief lyrical excerpts thus illustrate the way a previously established *song theme* on socio-urban criticism is able to be (in)fused with cultural content pertaining to St. Pauli. In so doing, Nate57's and Telly Tellz' rap track creates a 'third space,' which shows 'that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistorisized and read anew' (LOC: 55). While Mobb Deep's beat is appropriated as the musical signifier of urban and social desperation, the *song theme* is culturally and linguistically translated in order to become meaningful within a Hamburg context and re-historisised as a contemporary socio-urban narrative. However, in so doing, Telly Tellz and Nate57 also challenge the Germanness of their lyrical product. While their *linguistic orientation* supports Telly's and Nate57's local street credibility as rappers who iterate the language use amongst the lower social class, neither rappers are of Turkish descent.[544] This aspect widens their production of a 'third space' even further.

Nate57's and Telly Tellz' appropriation of *ot* and *parra* proves that language is not a fixed sign of culture, nor of nationality. Rather, it highlights the ambivalent 'process of language that is crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent' (LOC: 52). The 'thirdspace' experience of St. Pauli is thus lyrically represented as a 'secondspace' through the use of local as well as of multilingual signifiers. Indeed, Blacky White specifically claims that Rattos Locos 'wären nicht wie wir wären, wären wir nicht hier groß geworden. Weil das ist echt so ein Multikulti Hot Spot immer gewesen […] und das prägt dich. Das zeigt sich in der Musik.'[545]

Beyond musically and lyrically representing the local multiculturalism of St. Pauli, this 'thirdspace' experience is portrayed in the logo of Rattos Locos Records, as well (see Figure 6). Without creating a logo 'genau wie St. Pauli[546] mit einem Totenkopf!'[547]

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544 Turks comprise the largest ethnic minority in Germany; cf. Anonymous, 'Ausländische Bevölkerung in Deutschland 2011', in *Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutschland und Internationales* (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012) <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2012.pdf?__blob=publicationFile<20.2.2012>.> [accessed 21 April 2014].

545 Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.

546 'Genau wie St. Pauli' refers to the flag of local football team FC St. Pauli, whose skull and crossbones symbol became representative of the entire district and a sign for its local patriotism.

547 Ibid.

Rattos Locos present themselves as a trio of skulls situated in front of a set of crossbones. The largest skull in the centre is characterised by a streaked pattern on its head. The left one is defined by a dark patch of hair, whereas the right skull is merely portrayed with a faint grey shade on its head. Together, the three skulls serve to present St. Pauli as an urban borough where

> verschiedene Kulturen zusammenkommen. Das sieht man ja auch auf dem Logo. Der eine hat *Cornrows*, der andere hat so eine Kanakenfrisur[548] und der dritte hat so 'ne Glatze, Kurzhaar. Das soll die Deutschen, die Niggas und die Kanaken alle zusammen darstellen.[549]

Figure 6: Rattos Locos Records logo

Thus, according to Rattos Locos, two thirds of St. Pauli's population comprise an ethnic 'other,'[550] echoing Bhabha when he writes that the post-modern city 'has been altered by mass migration and settlement' (LOC: 316). Yet, the compelling aspect of Blacky White's statement is that the migrants and multicultural settlers in St. Pauli do not necessarily seek to alter their national affiliation towards Germany. Rather, the tri-

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[548] The German term '*Kanake'* is, according to Cheesman, often 'used of brown-skinned people. It has been appropriated by some racialized Germans, notably hip hoppers of color, as a group self-ascription. This combative usage goes back to the late 1980s in urban hip hop circles, where it is compared with US rappers' "niggah," though closer connotative equivalents are "spick" or, in the UK, "Paki,"' in Cheesman, Tom, 'Talking "Kanak": Zaimoglu contra Leitkultur', in Wolbert, Barbara and Deniz Göktürk, eds., 'Multicultural Germany: Arts, Media, and Performance', *New German Critique,* 92 (2004), 82-99 (p. 85).

[549] Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.

[550] St. Pauli belongs to the districts of Hamburg with the highest number of immigrants or Germans with a different cultural background, as well as with the highest unemployment rate; cf. Anonymous, 'Germany. Statistisches Amt für Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein', *Hamburger Stadtteilprofile 2013*, 15th edn (Hamburg: Anstalt des Öffentlichen Rechts, 2013) <http://www.statistik-nord.de/uploads/tx_standocuments/NR15_Statistik-Profile2013.pdf> [accessed 1 April 2014].

culturality presented by the self-stereotypical trio of skulls is also able to represent one person's national identity. Blacky White thus pursues German rap because he is 'halb Afrikaner, das ist schwarze Musik,'[551] yet adds that by becoming a rap label manager in Hamburg he now resembles a 'Business Kanak.'[552] Being German, African and a Kanake therefore seems to compose a fluid identity category without having to exclude each other.

This inclusive cultural statement also transcends the street rap genre and the specific urban space of St. Pauli. Former Eimsbush member Samy Deluxe, for instance, visually manifests his Africanness through his cornrows in the music video to 'Weck mich auf' (2001),[553] employing the same racial 'attribute' similar to Jango's emphasis on his afro in the previous close reading of his dance performance. Yet, Samy Deluxe also claims that he is 'mit Abstand der verrückteste Kanake'[554] and 'ein deutscher Mann, so steht's in meinem Pass'.[555] Hence, by expressing a German identity via German rap, Rattos Locos as well as Samy Deluxe challenge the

> debates on multiculturalism [which] are generally preoccupied with determining the degrees of compatibility or conflict between cultures. What is obscured by this perspective are the porous boundaries between groups, the diffuse notions of identity, the deterritorialized links between members of groups, the globalizing patterns of communication and the hybrid process of cultural transformation.[556]

In this case one might even talk about a post-hybrid process of cultural transformation since the multiple cultural identifications and racial appearances serve to represent a German identity rooted in Hamburg. Telly Tellz, for instance, refers to himself as a contemporary German '*Mischlingskind,'* provokingly appropriating this label of identity in the *song theme* of his first single and as the title of his first mix tape.[557] In this context, the rapper re-introduces this 'tribal stigma' as a valid and real contemporary state of identity, despite its historically-tainted racialised use in Germany, as explained by Herzog.

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[551] Blacky White, interviewed by author, 10 July 2012.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Cf. 'Samy Deluxe – Weck Mich Auf', *SamyDeluxeVEVO* (YouTube, 20 January 2012) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiWd14IoN2Y> [accessed 12 May 2014].
[554] Samy Deluxe, 'Reimemonsta 2011', *Schwarz Weiß* (EMI, 2011), CD.
[555] Samy Deluxe, 'Dis Wo ich Herkomm', *Dis Wo ich Herkomm* (EMI, 2009), CD.
[556] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 105.
[557] Cf. Telly Tellz, *Mischlingskind* (Rattos Locos Records, 2010), mixtape, online. For an analysis of Telly Tellz' track 'Mischlingskind' see Munderloh, Marissa K, '*Heb die Fahne hoch, Santa Pauli Patriot!:* A Case Study of Urban Place-Making in Rap Music' in Busse, Beatrix and Ingo H Warnke, eds., *Place-Making in urbanen Diskursen – Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zur Stadtforschung,* Diskursmuster – Discourse Patterns 7, (Boston/Berlin: de Gruyter 2014), pp. 421-442.

Samy Deluxe engages in a similar *linguistic discourse*, sharing the same fate as Telly Tellz who have both been born and raised in Hamburg with a German mother yet without their African father. In his song 'Schwarz Weiß' (2011), Samy Deluxe rhymes:

Ich bin 'ne Mischung, aber nenn mich nicht Mischling.

Nenn mich ‚Baby,' weil ich so frisch kling'.

Oder nenn mich Samy, weil ich so Deluxe bin.[558]

The verse playfully engages with labels and descriptions of 'tribal stigmata' whereby Samy Deluxe manages his African identity by rejecting the label *Mischling,* thus revealing a mixedness in terms of positive and negative understandings of the contemporary use of the term. Rather, Samy Deluxe describes himself through the way he sounds: deluxe. Indeed, this last aspect is directly captured in yet another song in which Samy Deluxe raps: '*Hör, wie elegant ich diese Sprache hier spreche, als ob ich diese dunkle Hautfarbe nicht hätte.*'[559] While characterising his rhetoric as elegant, Samy Deluxe also touches upon the supposed relationship between the poor command of the German language and being stigmatised as a minority or a foreigner – a relationship often emphasised in German gangsta or street rap. Yet, by not adhering to the urban practices, social norms and linguistic articulations that are tied to a gangsta or street rap genre, Samy Deluxe challenges this assumption as his rhetorical skills rather enable him to become spatially, socially, as well as racially transient. Taking advantage of this condition, Samy Deluxe continues to engage in a German cultural discourse via rap's lyrical aesthetic, however, he does so by re-framing the dominant commercial focus of German rap from its negative gangsta subgenre to a positive and hence relevant art form for German national culture. In an excerpt of the track 'Poesialbum'[560] (2011), Samy Deluxe, for instance, raps that he is

So Schiller, so Goethe,

So bitter, so böse.

Noch immer der größte

Poet, der hier lebt.

Wenn ihr jetzt noch mehr wollt,

Fütter' ich euch deutschen Dichtern Reime

Bis ihr alle brecht wie Bertold.

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[558] Samy Deluxe, 'Schwarz Weiß', *Schwarz Weiß* (EMI, 2011), CD.
[559] Ibid., 'Hände Hoch', *Schwarz Weiß* (EMI, 2011), CD.
[560] In 1996, Bremer hip-hop duo Zentrifugal also released a track called 'Poesiealbum,' which touched upon the lyrical sophistication of German rap.

Das ist für mich echter Erfolg.

Wenn der Text noch mehr rollt.

Und ich schein' wie der Morgenstern.

Hoffe, dass ihr alle

Aus den Reimen und den Worten lernt.

Meine Damen und Herren,

Was würde ich bloß tun hier, wär' ich nicht Rapstar?

Wahrscheinlich wär' ich der neue Erich Kästner.[561]

Through an alternating 'i' and 'ö' assonance, Samy Deluxe starts his stanza by comparing his rap skills and persona to the grandeur of the past German lyricists Schiller and Goethe. Claiming his status as Germany's greatest living poet, he continues with the use of similes in reference to German authors Bertold Brecht and Christian Morgenstern. By engaging in the practice of signifying, Samy Deluxe employs the second person plural of the verb *'brechen'* in the present tense, which results in the homophone and hence ambivalent word *'brecht,'* alluding to the aforementioned German poet's surname. In the latter example, Samy Deluxe employs the literal meaning of Morgenstern's surname in order to boast about the way he shines like Venus, the morning star.

Following these comparisons Samy Deluxe utilises rap's original function as an oral tradition whereby 'sämtliche oral kommunizierte Inhalte ihrer Gestalt nach flüchtig und zeitgebunden sind, [und] nur im Moment des kommunikativen Aktes von den an diesem Akt Teilhabenden wahrgenommen werden.'[562] Since the album on which *Poesiealbum* features was published without a song book, Samy Deluxe acknowledges his imaginary listeners by formally addressing them as *'Meine Damen und Herren*' and hopes that they are able to acquire knowledge from his words and rhymes. Then, in a final comparison, he equals his rap star status and skills to those of German author Erich Kästner.

This lyrical excerpt thus serves to show how Samy Deluxe fuses knowledge on Germany's literary history with rap's *ritualised speech act* of signifying and a *rap specific rhetoric* iterating the traditional 'braggadocious style'[563] of rap's lyrical delivery. This strategy has not been uncommon in German rap, with Cheesman noting that German rap 'increasingly sets itself in German lyric traditions; but this tendency is in

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[561] Samy Deluxe, 'Poesialbum', *Schwarz Weiß* (EMI, 2011), CD.
[562] Rappe, p. 139.
[563] Ogbar, p. 70.

productive tension with its continuing sense of indebtedness to American forebears, and its ear for new developments in American and other international hip hop'.[564] By engaging in this productive tension Samy Deluxe not only equates blackness with Germanness, but also alters the social status of rap. While clearly pronounced in standard German, the Afro-German rapper blends rap's lyrical practices with a historical discourse that re-signifies rap as being an art form for the literary educated.

Gizmo further describes Samy Deluxe as 'der beste Rapper Deutschlands,'[565] with which the rapper manages his 'stigma' by becoming a 'speaker' – a role which Goffman relates to socially stigmatised individuals who appear

> before various audiences of normal and of the stigmatized; they present the case for the stigmatized, when they themselves are natives of the group, provide a living model of fully-normal achievement, being heroes of adjustment who are subject to public awards for proving that an individual of this kind can be a good person (STGM: 24/5).

In so doing, however, Samy Deluxe does not present his 'tribal stigma' from a minority perspective but rather as a national and hence authoritative cultural sign, revealing 'how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority' (LOC: 51/2). This strategy ultimately rests in Samy Deluxe's post-hybrid lyrical presentation of identity in which his 'tribal stigma' becomes representative of contemporary German culture expressed through an engagement in rap.

As an interim summary to the first analysis on rap's manifestation in Hamburg, the exploration of hip-hop's lyrical art form illustrated the variety of strategies inherent in rap's social, spatial and historical components with which rappers have been able to establish rap as a meaningful cultural practice and with which they are able to express their regional, urban and national identity. While German rap in Hamburg started as a live performance and hence as a 'thirdspace' experience unfolding in domestic 'firstspaces,' a part of this tradition transcended into the commercial realm. Enabled by the structures and conditions of Hamburg's metropolitan cityspace, commercial German rap, on the one hand, transitioned from the initial spatial manifestation of rap into a 'secondspatial' discourse. Without the body being tied to a rap performance anymore, language became the most prominent substitution and signifier for the imagined 'secondspaces.' Three examples served to analyse the commercial

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[564] Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 210. German hip-hop crew Anarchist Academy had, for example, released a track called 'Brecht goes HipHop' in 1996 which even quoted Brecht, amongst other German lyricists. Cf. Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 209.

[565] Gizmo, interviewed by author, 17 July 2014.

manifestation of local rap, with lyrics becoming the focus of close readings and, at the same time, being treated as direct citations of the rappers. These selected close readings highlighted the ways in which differing perspectives of sociality, historicality and spatiality in Hamburg are implemented as lyrical representations of a German region, neighbourhood or nation and expressed through targeted uses of the German language. Yet, even beyond these lyrical examples and close readings of rap as 'secondspace' imageries, hip-hop's lyrical art form continues to be practised as a 'thirdspace' experience in Hamburg. Thus, rapper Stee concludes that, 'wenn du auf gute Hip-Hop Veranstaltungen gehen willst und dich ein bisschen auskennst, kannst du das auf jeden Fall mindestens einmal die Woche machen! Und ich glaube, das hat im Moment nicht jede Stadt.'[566] In line with this observation, the following analysis will now turn to the German rap community of Oldenburg.

4.5 Oldenburg and the Provincial Performances of German Rap

Rap in Oldenburg established itself in the same fashion as it did in Hamburg, namely as a live and non-commercial practice performed in indoor private 'firstspaces.' K-Four further adds that Oldenburg's overarching rap sound can be described as the 'the backpacker sound'[567] – a synonym for the aforementioned conscious rap subgenre, which reigned at the freestyle sessions in the basement of Schlechta Umgang. Indeed, this link between indoor spatiality, anti-commerciality and freestyle rap is addressed in the rap track 'One Love' (2007) in which Oldenburg rapper Jordan MC rhymes:

Guter Untergrund.

Ich versprech', du kannst ihn hier finden.

Hungrige MCs.

Ich sag' nur: 24 Linguisten.[568]

The term '*Untergrund*' refers to a spatial as well as to a non-commercial rap discourse in which Jordan MC claims that Oldenburg's underground rap community comprises 24 rappers, or in this case, linguists. Their identification as language scientists iterates the early German approach to rap, treating it as an art form for the German language aficionados as previously described by Samy Deluxe. However, Jordan MC in particular addresses one local freestyle crew named Linguisten 24 in which the number's original purpose serves to symbolise the location where the linguists engage in rap.

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[566] Stee, interviewed by author, 26 July 2012.
[567] K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
[568] Jordan MC, 'One Love' (2007), single, online.

While the rappers of Eimsbush represented their locality by appropriating the first syllable of their district Eimsbüttel, Oldenburg's rap crew base their spatial identification in a flat pertaining to number 24. Inhabited by three members of the crew, it is not the 'firstspace' of the basement but rather of the living room, which has become the epicentre of local freestyle rap. The domestic spatial discourse thus reflects a *Wohnzimmerlaune* in which the rappers primarily focus on honing their rhetorical skills and on creating improvised rhymed stories. These lyrical and linguistic priorities of this domesticised 'backpack' rap genre become even more evident when acknowledging that the 'firstspace' of the '24' is located in Oldenburg's small but nevertheless known red-light district. Hence, while Rattos Locos have based their local identity in St. Pauli, the same anti-normative urban 'secondspace' of pimps and prostitutes in Oldenburg becomes irrelevant for its linguists, as their rap genre and practices do not aim at mirroring the deviant socio-urban discourses through *song themes* or *linguistic orientation*. Rather, Moe compares Oldenburg's rap community to the 'Künstler-Boheme der 20er.'[569] Attending the indoor freestyle sessions, the local graffiti artist elaborates that

> so eine elektrisierende Geschichte habe ich lange nicht mehr erlebt. Dass das Donnerstagsabends immer offene Tür ist. Jeder kann reinkommen, jeder kann rappen, jeder kann was beitragen. Und ich habe da Dinge erlebt, wo mir die Tränen gekommen sind. Wo Jungs da drüber erzählt haben, wie sie ihren Vater zum ersten Mal hier über Facebook gefunden haben. Und dann interagiert haben. Jeder hat seinen Seelenstriptease betrieben in Reimform. Und das war eine Atmosphäre, wo dir die Tränen einfach gekullert sind, weil die Menschen ganz authentisch waren.[570]

Moe's description of authenticity is thus defined by the interrelatedness of an electrifying 'thirdspace' experience created through the rappers' 'interaction (that is, face-to-face interaction) [which] may be roughly defined as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence' (PSEL: 15). In other words, by engaging in freestyle rap, the practitioners present their social self via improvised yet, nevertheless, personal *song themes* as they convert the living room of the '24' into a Goffmanian 'front.'

The relevance of the domestic 'firstspaces' for local rappers becomes apparent even beyond the reciprocal freestyle sessions. As Oldenburg does not have the structures that enable a commercial development of rap,[571] such as Hamburg, rappers as well as

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[569] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[570] Ibid.
[571] Having said this, it should be mentioned that nowadays the possibility has arisen to become commercially successful by uploading songs on the Internet, such as on YouTube, regardless of one's urban location. In that way, rappers judge their success by counting the amount of views in terms of clicks that their track or video has received.

music producers build their recording studios in living rooms, basements or bedrooms. Furthermore, the specific living room of the '24' remains a Goffmanian 'front' even for recorded rap productions by becoming a designated 'setting' for accompanying rap video clips. This is most recently the case for local rapper Juiz' rap track '4x4' (2013), which features linguists Jordan MC, Starchild and Macentosh.[572]

While the entire cinematic narrative unfolds in the flat '24,' the *song theme* chosen for this recorded rap track connects the contemporary appropriation of rap in Oldenburg to the past performative tradition of rap in the Bronx. A close reading of a lyrical excerpt of '4x4' will provide a closer insight into the way Oldenburg's rappers authenticate their artistic performance, as Macentosh claims that they are

Oldenburg City's Master Chiefs.

Für Peeps,

Die richtig Bock drauf haben.

Die Hip-Hop auch noch spüren und nicht in Form von Klamottenmarken.

Hip-Hop auch noch verstehen

Ohne billiges Bumsgepose.

Inszenierte Beefgeschichten gesetzt als schlechte Promotion.

Wo sind die wahren Heads von früher?

Fast keiner mehr zu sehen.

Wir tragen gerne euer Erbe,

Bis es in anderen lebt.

Für die nächsten, die es lernen

Ist die Zeit noch nicht zu spät.

Begreift Rap in seiner ReimformUnd ihr könnt Rap verstehen.[573]

The rap stanza comprises the common rap verse structure of sixteen bars, captured furthermore in the title of the song along with the division of four rappers and four rap parts. Macentosh's part closes the track with a continuation of the *song theme's* boastful self-display and *rap specific rhetoric,* such as referring to hip-hop aficionados as 'heads' in order to show knowledge of and affiliation with hip-hop culture. More specifically,

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[572] Cf. 'Juiz feat. Starchild, Jordan MC und Macentosh – "4x4"', *JuizySupport* (YouTube, 6 November 2013) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxdfdcjR3n0> [accessed 12 February 2014].

[573] Macentosh in Juiz feat. None aka Starchild, Jordan&Macentosh, '4x4', *Eigenregie* (Cubetribe Studio, 2014), CD.

Macentosh places hip-hop's norms and practices in a historical discourse, which is represented by his and his colleagues' engagement in hip-hop culture's 'true' and hence original narrative. While the *linguistic orientation* is manifested in standard German infused with English slang, Macentosh frames the true narrative of rap as a 'thirdspace' experience, as an art form to be felt or sensed beyond visible fashion statements, images and commercial marketing strategies. In stating this, Macentosh touches upon Tickner's argument in which she explains that while rap 'came alive on the streets of the ghetto'[574] it was subsequently 'exported to the rest of the world by capitalist music industry, which influenced its development by creating certain notions of authenticity detached from hip-hop culture's original social and political roots.'[575]

By re-attaching the importance of hip-hop's roots and by teaching and passing on the art form to the following generation, Macentosh situates himself in rap's historical continuity, albeit spatially re-located in Oldenburg, Germany. Yet, as Macentosh ultimately concludes, the location remains irrelevant for a faithful engagement in rap as one needs to understand its lyrical aesthetics. This perspective thus liberates the art form from any social discourses or particular urban spaces and cultural histories. Hence, by proudly identifying as 'Oldenburg City's Master Chiefs,' the rappers featuring on '4x4' provide a fitting example of the way hip-hop culture can indeed be 'ein Kleinstadtphänomen [und] muss nicht zwangsläufig mit der für Großstädte charakteristischen Erfahrung des sozialen Bruchs, der Heterogenität und Dichte verbunden sein.'[576]

The positive affiliation with Oldenburg can be detected in other recorded rap tracks, as well. Stylez-Tyson, for instance, begins his track 'One Love Boom' (2012), by claiming

Oldenburg, 261,

Ihr seid meine Stadt.

Jeder einzelne von euch, weil ihr sie einzigartig macht.[577]

While Oldenburg's urban uniqueness is created by its inhabitants, Stylez-Tyson expresses his identification with the cityspace by referring to it in the 'secondspatial' code '261'. This number comprises the first three digits of Oldenburg's postcode. Such urban significations are not uncommon in rap, being an adaptation of US-American rappers' original practice of referencing 'particular streets, boulevards and

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574 Tickner, p. 126.
575 Ibid.
576 Friedrich and Klein, 'Populäre Stadtansichten. Bildinszenierungen des Urbanen im HipHop', p. 87.
577 Stylez-Tyson, 'One Love Boom' (2012), single, online.

neighbourhoods, telephone area codes [and] postal service zip codes.'[578] Similarly, Nate57 expresses his urban affiliation through the number 57, which represents his St. Pauli neighbourhood, the *Karolinenviertel,* with its post code terminating in 57.[579]

Yet, in the case of Oldenburg, the combination '261' rather signifies the city in its entirety. The last two digits are decisive for determining the city's districts, since their omission allows '261' to refer to Oldenburg as a holistic cityspace. The numerical code therefore provides a metropolitan feel to this average-sized northern German city, as Friedrich and Klein point out that 'global zirkulierenden Symbole des Urbanen im Lokalen [stellen] ein urbanes Lebensgefühl her.'[580] However, Stylez-Tyson elaborates on the consequence of this all-encompassing 'secondspace' perspective of Oldenburg when he continues to rap that

Ich kenne jeden Straßenzug,

Wie meine Westentasche.

Ein Haufen Bräute,

Weil ich jede zweite schon im Bettchen hatte.

Tausend Leute,

Weil ich mit jedem dritten Geschäfte mache.

Und nicht zuletzt,

Weil jeder vierte mit jedem fünften hier verwandt ist.[581]

By employing *rap specific rhetoric* in terms of the use of simile, Stylez-Tyson expresses his profound acquaintance with Oldenburg's 'firstspace,' as well as with its inhabitants. While engaging in the *ritualised speech act* of boasting in order to state the nature of his local relationships, Stylez-Tyson's knowledge and insights into Oldenburg's cityspace is ultimately due to the inhabitants' supposed genetic relatedness, alluding to the city's small-scaled 'firstspace' and hence intimate 'thirdspace' experience. Nevertheless, the positive identification with Oldenburg is captured in the title of the track where 'One Love' acts as a synonym for Oldenburg's hip-hop community.

The term's scene-specific signification was established by Jordan MC's aforementioned rap track 'One Love.' While the concept of an all-encompassing love has been adapted into hip-hop terminology via Jamaican cultural influences in the Bronx, it became

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[578] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First*, p. xvii.
[579] Nate57, interviewed by author, 21 August 2012.
[580] Friedrich and Klein, 'Populäre Stadtansichten. Bildinszenierungen des Urbanen im HipHop', p. 87.
[581] Stylez-Tyson, 'One Love Boom', (2012), single, online.

symbolic for the unity of hip-hop's four main artistic elements.[582] Tickner even highlights that 'the local, everyday absorption of dominant cultural commodities such as music changes the commodities' significance but does so in a myriad ways, depending on the place and time in question,'[583] Jordan MC exclusively inscribes hip-hop's one love into Oldenburg's local hip-hop community. He re-interprets the first letters of the two words as synonyms for Oldenburg, since 'OL' represents the city on national vehicle registration plates.

Yet, Oldenburg's hip-hop community is also represented through Jordan MC's targeted use of lyrically coded messages. In so doing, Jordan MC's discursive strategy creates an imagined bond between him and the listener since, as Berns and Schlobinski point out in their analysis of German rap, 'to decipher [a] line is thus a sort of privilege, as listeners are made to feel that they share a special knowledge'.[584] In line with this observation, Jordan MC, for example, raps

Danke für die Stunden im Keller,

Sbek.

Ich vergess' nichts.

Gute Momente!

Das Leben ist oft ‚Arm und Hässlich.'[585]

The name Sbek only makes sense when knowing that he is a local graffiti artist and a member of the local hip-hop community, while Jordan MC's description of life simultaneously comes to signify a life, which is positively affected by the 'thirdspace' experience of rival freestyle rap crew Arm und Hässlich. Together with the close readings of Macentosh's and Stylez-Tyson's lyrics, the brief rap excerpts therefore present ways in which Oldenburg's local hip-hop community is able to engage in rap as a meaningful and authentic practice within a small German city without the same spatial and social conditions as Hamburg.

At the same time, the spatial appropriation of rap in Oldenburg can be more clearly distinguished between 'the micro and the macro, with neither inherently privileged, but only with the accompanying recognition that no city – indeed, no lived space – is ever

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582 For more information on the religious and spiritual origins of the 'one love' concept in Jamaican culture see Roskind, Robert, *Rasta Heart: A Journey into One Love* (Blowing Rock, NC: One Love, 2001).

583 Tickner, p. 126.

584 Berns, Jan, and Peter Schlobinski, 'Constructions of Identity in German Hip-hop Culture', in Androutsopoulos, Jannis, and Alexandra Georgakopoulou, eds., *Discourse Constructions of Youth Identities* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003), pp. 197-219 (p. 208).

585 Jordan MC, 'One Love' (2007), single, online.

completely knowable no matter what perspective' (THSP: 310). The micro is located in the 'firstspaces' of selected domestic rooms that encapsulate the 'thirdspace' experience of local rap as an improvised, rhetorical form of the presentation of self. This appropriation of rap is therefore comparable to the original tradition of rap in the Bronx prior to the commercial turn of hip-hop's lyrical element. The macro, on the other hand, is captured in the small cityspace of Oldenburg as it is symbolically 'enlarged' by lyrically treating it as a holistic urban 'secondspace,' which is enforced through the use of distinct codes such as 261 or One Love. These two spatial perspectives also have an influential effect on rap's social discourse, since neither the standard German *linguistic orientation* nor the personal or locally-based *song themes* communicate a particular or a deviant social status. Rather, the general language use mirrors K-Four's statement that Oldenburg's rap community comprises 'normal people who are living their normal life,'[586] which in Goffman's point of view refers to 'unstigmatised' people, in contrast to the lifestyles promoted by gangsta or street rappers (cf. STGM: 5).

Indeed, with none of the members of the Linguisten 24 being of a different ethnicity to German, the language use does not serve to manage 'tribal stigmata' or 'blemishes of character' compared to the lyrical messages in the majority of contemporary German gangsta rap. Rather, by belonging to a middle-class, white German hip-hop community, Oldenburg's rappers adapt rap according to the spaces and social structures available to them in Oldenburg: as an underground, communal practice centred in fostering local interaction and a creative engagement in the German language. Hence, in order for rap to function as a communal local practice, Forman asserts that 'lyrics and rhythms must achieve success on the home front first, where the flow, subject matter, style and image must resonate meaningfully among those who share common bonds to place.'[587] However, while the overall approach to rap in Oldenburg is not driven by commercial success, local rappers who do attempt to become marketable choose to alter the common subject matter and style of rap that had previously resonated meaningfully amongst its local rappers.

This, for example, is the case with NewMan on the Block. According to K-Four, 'Oldenburg is not that big that you can say it is a gangsta town like Hannover or Hamburg. Where a lot of crime does happen. We are not in New York or L.A. *(laughing)* where people get shot by drive-by.'[588] As Oldenburg cannot provide 'thirdspace'

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[586] K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
[587] Forman, '"Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music', p. 73.
[588] Ibid.

experiences relevant for creating gangsta rap or street rap narratives, Oldenburg rapper NewMan on the Block nevertheless insists that his local rap is 'Gangsta!'[589]

NewMan was introduced to German rap whilst in prison, since '*da* haben die zur Zeit alle Bushido gehört.'[590] With German-Tunisian gangsta rapper Bushido signed to Aggro Berlin, NewMan's understanding of German rap was instantly framed by ghetto-centred narratives about Berlin's socially deviant lifestyles. In order to adhere to the norms and lyrical messages of this commercial subgenre of rap, NewMan has strategically re-functioned his local urban district of Nadorst into 'das kleine Ghetto.'[591] NewMan bases this 'secondspace' perspective on the supposed fact that 'wenn da zwei dicke Hochhäuser stehen, dann hast du ein Ghetto *(laughs).* Geht ja immer ganz schnell, dass man irgendwas als Ghetto bezeichnet. Wenn man irgendwo eine Gegend hat, wo viele sozial schwache Leute hingehen und viele Ausländer.'[592] While describing Oldenburg's ghetto from a particular 'firstspace' as well as from a 'thirdspace' perspective defined by the lived experience of socially stigmatised inhabitants, NewMan even identifies with this ghetto imagery 'weil ich im Block[593] groß geworden bin.'[594] This socio-spatial discourse is ultimately represented through his artist name, which fuses the literal translation of his German surname with the name of commercial US-American rap boy group NewKids on the Block.[595]

Yet, despite creating and identifying with a 'secondspatial' urban ghetto in Oldenburg NewMan does not represent his imaginary home in linguistic terms. With German gangsta rap's common articulation based in a *'Straßenüberslang*,' as previously described by Samy Deluxe, NewMan's *linguistic orientation* is rather manifested in his use of standard German. His lyrical aims are moreover located in 'hin und wieder mal in einer Zeile jemanden zum Lachen bringen. Coole Sprüche, auch *Punch Lines* genannt. So was finde ich gut. So was feier ich selber. So, wo man erst richtig hinhören muss. Wortspiele, Metaphern, […],'[596] NewMan rather lyrically emphasises his authoritative status as an ethnic German. In other words, NewMan engages in a deviant socio-spatial discourse that does not aim at re-framing minority discourses but at supporting his German nationalist perspective, elaborating that due to 'meine Vergangenheit mit

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[589] NewMan on the Block, interviewed by author, 11 February 2012.
[590] Ibid.
[591] Ibid.
[592] Ibid.
[593] The term 'block' has become a signature location within German street rap to describe a ghetto, especially since Sido referred to his neighbourhood as *mein Block* in his eponymous track in 2004.
[594] NewMan on the Block, interviewed by author, 11 February 2012.
[595] Cf. Ibid.
[596] Ibid.

Hooligans und solchen Konsorten [...] kriege ich auch manchmal YouTube-Einträge so: „Seit wann Nazis denn rappen?"'[597]

According to German hip-hop scholar Murat Güngör, such political and social discordant narratives have become a common feature. In an interview with Bushido, Güngör, for example, explains that German youth

> denken ja nicht mehr in Kategorien wie Links und Rechts. Für die ist es kein Widerspruch, Bushido zu hören und NPD zu wählen. Sie picken sich raus, was ihnen gefällt. Aus deinen Stücken nehmen sie sich eben die aggressive Härte. Das Gefährliche an eurer Musik ist doch, dass Jugendliche plötzlich ganz selbstverständlich mit nationalistischen, sexistischen und extrem aggressiven Metaphern spielen.[598]

These split political statements can also be found in NewMan's *song themes,* which, for example, include 'patriotische Songs für Deutschland.'[599] In his track 'Ich bin Deutschland' (2011) NewMan raps that he has

Blaue Augen, weiße Haut.

Ich bin Deutschland.

Ich bin kein Nazi und Faschist,

Doch ich bin Deutschland.

[…]

Und dieser Araber hier ist mein Freund, man.[600]

While, on the one hand, NewMan creates his gangsta image in the 'thirdspace' of the blocks of Nadorst, a close reading of this lyrical excerpt shows how he expands his spatial identity discourse towards a national Germanness. The 'secondspace' of the ghetto provides a juxtaposing historical perspective as it 'conjures images from the past: Jewish ghettos, genocide, and Nazi racism.'[601] By representing his national identity though stereotypical 'attributes' that denote 'Aryan purity' and hence Nazi racism, NewMan's self-reflection as 'being Germany' also re-negotiates the past political and racial messages behind these disturbing cultural signifiers: not only does he deny a Nazi affiliation despite his physical description of self but he also affirms his friendship

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[597] Ibid.

[598] Rühle, Alex, and Dirk Peitz, 'Interview mit Bushido, Loh, Güngör – Harte Texte und die Härte der Nazis', *Sueddeutsche Zeitung – Kultur* (Sueddeutsche.de, 11 May 2010) <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/interview-mit-bushido-loh-guengoer-harte-texte-und-die-haerte-der-nazis-1.425538-2> [accessed 30 May 2012]. For more information regarding the relationship between German nationalist movements and gangsta rap music see Güngör and Loh, pp. 278-315.

[599] NewMan on the Block, interviewed by author, 11 February 2012.

[600] NewMan on the Block, 'Ich bin Deutschland', *Kategorie Gangsta* (2011), mixtape, CD.

[601] Stehle, p. 12.

with an Arab. Yet, the rapper does not specify whether '*dieser Araber*' refers to a foreigner in Germany or to a local inhabitant who is described as being of Middle Eastern descent by NewMan. Indeed, his supposed friend may understand his phenotype as a marker of Germanness.

NewMan's paradoxical narratives and contradictory presentation of self in his rap lyrics thus expose the limits of rap's representation of reality with NewMan admitting that 'zu mir sagen auch alle, ich bin nicht authentisch *(laughs)*, weil ich zu viel übertreibe und nicht echt ist, was ich rappe.'[602] The reason for this lack of perceived authenticity lies in the fact that his imagined 'secondspace' and the narratives positioned in this space do not resonate meaningfully in Oldenburg and amongst its rap community. NewMan therefore provides an example of the way an engagement in rap can be contested via a mismatch of spatial discourses.

The following example relates to a different discordance, this time concerning rapper K-Four. Having already been mentioned as a local rapper, K-Four was born and raised in Harare until relocating to Oldenburg during his childhood. Being Oldenburg's only black rapper, K-Four's *song themes* are nevertheless inspired by 'my life, the people around me, my environment.'[603] Disseminating stories which are framed by his local 'thirdspace' experience in Oldenburg, the African rapper further elaborates on the importance to represent one's urban community for 'who else is gonna be proud of you, if not your city? That is where your friends is [sic]. That's your hometown.'[604]

Compellingly, however, K-Four's *song themes* are delivered in a *linguistic orientation* that does not resonate meaningfully amongst his local rap community, for he expresses himself in English. While his language choice could nevertheless serve to reflect his Zimbabwean nationality, K-Four rather rejects the employment of his native English since 'they all mix it up with Shona when they speak in my country.'[605] Instead, K-Four chooses to appropriate AAVE in order to 'keep it international so [that] anybody can understand.'[606] Nevertheless, K-Four's employment of AAVE comprises 'slang words. Like, words which are even hard to identify if English is your native language. […] I would say *gwop*. They say *skrilla*. All words for money *(laughs).* […] That's New York slang.'[607] Thus, in the introductory track to his mix tape *The Beginner* (2012) K-Four raps

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[602] NewMan on the Block, interviewed by author, 11 February 2012.
[603] K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
[604] Ibid.
[605] K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
[606] Ibid.
[607] Ibid.

This is the story of my life.

The story of a winner.

[...]

I'm a killer.

Fuck them like a bad bitch,

For the skrilla.[608]

With K-Four beginning his lyrical journey by re-living his life in Germany, it remains questionable whether the appearance of New York slang is easier to understand than Shona within K-Four's otherwise standard English narrative. With linguistic codes thus not reflecting K-Four's personal story, as they neither relate to his Zimbabwean nor Germany identity, K-Four rather seems to employ AAVE as a strategy of cultural camouflage, which enables him to be (*mis*)understood as an African-American rapper.

In line with this observation, local rapper Henry the First admits that 'wenn man seine Musik hört und seine Raps hört, dann klingen die auch echt amerikanisch so. Wenn mir das jetzt jemand zeigt und ich kenne den nicht, würde ich denken das ist jemand aus Amerika.'[609] Hence, K-Four manages his 'tribal stigma' in order to claim a 'real nigga status.' K-Four's mimetic *linguistic orientation* combined with his physical 'attributes' equip him with the necessary tools in order to conform to the image of a commercial African-American rap artist. According to Bhabha, such a negotiation of identity 'proposes a social subject constituted through cultural hybridisation, the overdetermination of communal or group differences, the articulation of baffling alikeness and banal divergence.'[610] By presenting a 'baffling alikeness' to an African-American rapper, K-Four equally presents a 'banal divergence' from German rap. While this strategy may have resonated successfully during the early 1980s in Germany, it is now understood by some listeners as an unfaithful practice of rap, with Henry the First further explaining

> wenn ich 50Cent hören will, dann höre ich 50Cent. Und nicht einen Schwarzen aus Deutschland, der auch so rappt wie 50Cent. Ne? [...] Ich meine gibt es einen amerikanisch-sprechenden Musiker *aus* Deutschland im Rap, der erfolgreich geworden ist? – Nein![611]

The issue that Henry the First highlights is thus not related to K-Four being a Zimbabwean living in Germany but to K-Four's targeted *linguistic orientation,* which does not iterate his position within a German cultural context. While K-Four

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[608] K-Four, 'The Beginner', *The Beginner* (Str8 Team Ent., 2012), mixtape, online.
[609] Henry the First, interviewed by author, 25 January 2012.
[610] Bhabha, 'Culture's In-Between', p. 168.
[611] Henry the First, interviewed by author, 25 January 2012.

nevertheless states that his *song themes* are 'influenced by my life over here so when you listen to some of my songs, I'm not saying most of my songs, but some of my songs you can hear I am influenced by the German culture,'[612] his *linguistic orientation* creates a rupture in the mirroring effect of his 'thirdspace' experience in Oldenburg.

A last example of the way Oldenburg's rap tradition is altered in order to pursue commercial goals compares to K-Four's relation to Germany, for local rappers MicFire and his former[613] colleague Roulette moved to Germany as young teenagers, as well. However, they previously belonged to

> the Germanic diaspora, who had been dispersed across Eastern Europe, and may no longer speak the German language, or have had any contact with the state for generations, [yet] are entitled to full citizenship and are offered welfare packages to encourage their 'return' to the motherland.[614]

Having thus returned to their motherland of Germany, Roulette nevertheless states that he is from 'Kasachstan, weil die Mentalität ist geblieben.'[615] This becomes apparent in his and MicFire's use of Russian as their designated language in rap. The reason, according to MicFire, is 'weil ich mich da am wohlsten fühle [wenn ich] auf Russisch rappe halt, ne? Auf meine Heimatsprache.'[616] Similarly, Roulette explains that 'ich habe sofort auf Russisch geschrieben, weil mein Deutsch war nicht so weit und ist immer noch nicht so weit.'[617] Hence, instead of taking advantage of the post-gangsta rap language discourse where Samy Deluxe explains that rappers are able to admit to themselves 'ich muss jetzt nicht so gut deutsch sprechen können, wie Samy oder Torch, um deutsch rappen zu können,'[618] MicFire and Roulette rather engage in a Russian *linguistic orientation* as a sign of cultural nostalgia. At the same time, however, this *linguistic orientation* displaces the rappers' physical spatiality, which evidently pertains to Germany. By recording and performing in Germany, a 'third space' emerges in terms of MicFire's and Roulette's identity as artists. This becomes evident in the following dialogue:

> MicFire: ‚Also ich würde „Künstler, der aus Deutschland berichtet" sagen *(laughing).* So würde ich es nennen! Aber jetzt kein deutscher Künstler. Oder ich *weiß* auch nicht, Alter. Im normalem Pass steht ja auch ich bin ja Deutscher, ne?'
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> Roulette: ‚Ja.'
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> MicFire: ‚Was würdest du sagen?'

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[612] K-Four, interviewed by author, 9 February 2012.
[613] Roulette died on 1 December 2013.
[614] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 60.
[615] Roulette, interviewed by author, 14 February, 2012.
[616] MicFire, interviewed by author, 14 February 2012.
[617] Roulette, interviewed by author, 14 February, 2012.
[618] Samy Deluxe, interviewed by author, 29 July 2012.

> Roulette: ‚Ja, also theoretisch so... hmm...' *(thinking).*
>
> MicFire: ‚[…] Ich würd einfach sagen: „Ich bin Deutscher," weil es in meinem Pass steht und weil ich mich auch sehr wohl hier fühle und das Land ist gut zu mir. Und ich versuch dem Land auch das zu geben, was es mir gibt so.'
>
> Roulette: ‚Ja.'
>
> MicFire: ‚[…] wie gesagt, ich bin ein Künstler, der aus Deutschland berichtet' *(laughs).*
>
> Roulette: ‚Ja, würd' ich auch so sagen.'
>
> MicFire: ‚[…] Ich habe viele deutsche Freunde. Ich fühle mich hier zuhause. Ich fühle mich *echt* hier zuhause *(thinking).* Aber weiß, wo meine Wurzeln sind. Ich glaube das können wir so stehen lassen. Für mich, von meiner Seite aus.'
>
> Roulette: ‚Ja ich würde sagen: „Ich bin russischer Künstler," […] aber sonst würde ich auch sagen: „Ich bin einer, der aus Deutschland berichtet."'[619]

This 'third space' specifically opens as MicFire and Roulette re-negotiate the 'dominant assumption on the relationship between traditional authenticity and contemporary culture.'[620] One the one hand, MicFire raps in his traditional and authentic Russian *Heimatsprache*, while on the other hand, he feels *zuhause* in contemporary Germany. This dialectic is ultimately summarised by MicFire when he explains that 'wenn ich nach Russland komme so sage ich: „Hier sind meine Wurzeln, hier sind meine Leute." Ne? Und: „Ich komme aus Oldenburg, Deutschland." Fertig.'[621]

The German spatiality is rather captured in MicFire's and Roulette's *song themes* since they reflect 'was das Leben ist um uns herum so.'[622] Similar to K-Four's lyrical content, the cityspace of Oldenburg provides 'the social contexts and raw resources for lyrics'[623] whilst, however, rapping in Russian. Therefore, Roulette and MicFire also create a 'third space' on a 'secondspatial' level as *song themes* relate to a German national sphere, yet are expressed through *rap specific rhetoric* and *ritualized speech acts* embedded in a Russian *linguistic orientation.* This is, for example, illustrated in the rap track 'Made in Germany'[624] (2013) in which MicFire places himself and his rap productions in a bi-national discourse:

Eto made in germany – quality!

(This is made in Germany – quality!)

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[619] MicFire and Roulette, interviewed by author, 14 February 2012.
[620] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 40.
[621] MicFire, interviewed by author, 14 February 2012.
[622] Ibid.
[623] Forman, '"Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music', p. 71.
[624] In February 2015, rapper BOZ from Rattos Locos Records also released a rap track and album called 'Made in Germany,' which presents his perspective as a German-Pakistani street rapper from Hamburg.

Russkii rap kak zhiguli.[625]

(Russian rap is like Zhiguli.)

By infusing Russian lyrics with English terminology, which is manifested in bilingual rhymes similar to Nate57's and Telly Tellz's German-Turkish discourse, MicFire distinguishes his Russian rap sound produced in Germany from the Russian rap that is produced in Russia. Through the use of simile, he compares the stereotypical high quality productions of German goods to the low quality productions of former Soviet cars. In other words, MicFire enhances his Russian rap sound through his access to German culture, and hence to German work ethics, as his producers are ethnic Germans from Oldenburg. Thus, while being of German ethnicity as well as having German citizenship, MicFire reverses his identity discourse by employing his access to German culture to empower his Russian identity – and hence opposite to the way Germanness has been negotiated by Hamburg's hip-hop dancers who rather use their foreignness as a contribution and enrichment to their semi or non-ethnic Germanness and their belonging to Hamburg, as explained on pp. 88-90. This identity strategy is visibly manifested on the cover of MicFire's eponymous EP (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: 'Made in Germany' EP cover

[625] MicFire, 'Made in Germany', *Made in Germany* (Mafyo & Star Trip Loopers, 2013), EP, online.

MicFire is seated at a table with a knife and fork in his hand. The plate placed in front of him is overflowing with Russian food varieties with the traditional cuisine represented by sliced sausages, potatoes and *pel'meni* dumplings amongst other items. MicFire therefore nurtures himself through Russian food and hence Russian traditions even though the image was taken in a 'firstspace' located in Germany. With his national identity officially manifested in the Russian passport (despite MicFire previously stating that he is registered as a German citizen), MicFire's social status is further framed from an upscale perspective as he symbolically surrounds himself by financial wealth emanating from his German environment. This is represented through 50 euro notes resting in his Russian passport, as well as through the key to his Mercedes-Benz, setting a contrast between this German car manufacturer and the aforementioned Soviet Zhiguli.

Despite producing rap music in Germany, MicFire's *song themes* are not addressed to a German audience. Rather, the 'Schwerpunkt liegt komplett [auf] Russland,'[626] since MicFire explains that 'wenn wir irgendwas ausdrücken wollen, dann muss man das auch verstehen.'[627] In order to overcome this problem in Oldenburg, MicFire, and previously Roulette, have based their local performances in a particular 'firstspace' whose 'secondspace' identity is a Russian nightclub. While this nightclub is materially in Oldenburg, neither its 'secondspace' image nor its 'thirdspace' experience iterate the actual national location of this 'firstspace,' as party-goers are almost exclusively of Russian ethnicity. Therefore, the language of communication inside the club is Russian, while its selection of bar snacks even include Russian foods, such as *shashlik* or *kielbasa*. Hence, with Russian culture being lived in this German geographic space, the dance club becomes a cultural 'third space' in its 'thirdspace' experience where Russian rap lyrics are able to resonate meaningfully and successfully amongst a portion of Oldenburg's audience. This aspect therefore contrasts NewMan and K-Four's socio-cultural rap messages and images as rappers from Oldenburg, especially since MicFire also participates in the aforementioned freestyle sessions in the living room of the '24,' thus keeping the local tradition of improvised rap practices alive, as well.

4.6 Summary

The comparative analysis between rap's manifestation in Hamburg and in Oldenburg has provided insights into the ways in which rap has become a meaningful practice in two different German urban locales, with the two cityspaces allowing for distinct local

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[626] MicFire, interviewed by author, 14 February, 2012.
[627] Ibid.

developments of hip-hop's lyrical art form. In both case studies, rap was initially appropriated as a freestyling practice with which rappers began discovering the linguistic possibilities of their languages. In so doing, they also experienced rap as a live 'thirdspace' located in material domestic 'firstspaces.' Detached from the social, spatial and historical components that shaped the art of rap in the Bronx, the two German communities thus exemplified that 'the way its [rap's] cultural symbols and language are appropriated, localized, and hybridized is intimately linked to how specific social actors experience the world as lived reality.'[628]

Oldenburg's underground rap tradition has remained tied to its initial spatial practices, while Hamburg's cityspace provided the conditions and structures for rappers to pursue this lyrical art form commercially. This latter intention of rap altered the rapper's relationship to the cityspace, as it became expressed as a mediated imagined 'secondspace.' With this urban differentiation in mind, the

> assertion of Spatiality opens the Historicality and Sociality of human lifeworlds to interpretations and knowledges that many of its most disciplined observers never imagined, while simultaneously maintaining the rich insights they provide for understanding the production of lived space (THSP: 72).

In Oldenburg, the acknowledgement of rap's spatiality has shown how ethnic German rappers manage their authentic engagement in rap, despite living in a particularly small provincial cityspace. The spatial conditions do not allow for much variation in terms of distinct representations of urban attributes, with the conscious or backpack rap genre of freestyling becoming the most viable form of local rap. In so doing, the rappers treat their city as a homogeneous whole without nuanced neighbourhoods and particular boroughs in which other rap genres can flourish. Moreover, as rap is not primarily pursued with commercial intentions, Oldenburg's rappers do not need to provide their rap productions with a local identity or style of genre often expressed in *linguistic orientations* and *song themes*. Rather, rappers such as Stylez-Tyson, Macentosh, Jordan MC and Juiz engage in rap in their personal spare time, with this lyrical art form becoming an artistic, almost therapeutic form of communication within their local German lifestyle.

Yet, when rappers from Oldenburg seek a commercial route and want be known beyond local boundaries, ethnic German rapper NewMan, for example, engages in a provocative, nationalist discourse by identifying himself as a local gangsta rapper from the imagined 'secondspace' of the ghetto. K-Four chooses to participate in an imagined cultural-historical discourse by presenting himself as an African-American rapper using AAVE in order for his rap to be understood and consumed at an international level.

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[628] Tickner, p. 128.

However, both strategies put the rapper at risk of not being deemed authentic, as the rap productions do not reflect the actual 'firstspace' and 'thirdspace' experiences of Oldenburg.

The only exception to the established local approach to rap is provided by MicFire, and formerly Roulette, who partake in Oldenburg's rap freestyling tradition yet also participate in a commercial Russian rap discourse. Due to the number of German citizens sharing MicFire's bi-cultural identity, his Russian-framed 'secondspace' perspective of Oldenburg is able to resonate meaningfully amongst German consumers of Russian heritage. Interestingly, MicFire does not attempt to affirm his German ethnicity through rap but rather aims at improving his Russian rap music and image through his contact with German culture, thus reversing any claim towards a post-hybrid German identity.

In Hamburg, on the other hand, the cityspace's structures have been able to accommodate different subgenres and their practices. Commercially-oriented rappers can therefore represent different social, spatial and historical perspectives of their cityspace. Fettes Brot, for instance, employed the northern German linguistic signifier of *Platt* as an identifier of their northern German region, with lyrics engaging in a historical discourse that relied on local knowledge as well as on insights into hip-hop's practices. The mainly ethnic German rappers thus hybridised their regional culture, while the understanding of transnational Nordic codes and traditions also enabled the inclusion of other ethnicities and cultural backgrounds into this consciously fabricated identity category.

Moving into a more present manifestation of local rap after the wave of gangsta rap dominated the commercial image of German hip-hop, Rattos Locos have presented their social background by lyrically reflecting Hamburg's lived streets through their use of unsophisticated, bilingual German. By situating themselves in a historical and spatial narrative of St. Pauli, the culturally hybrid rappers further emphasise their social deviance by belonging to a neighbourhood that perpetuates anti-normative behaviours. They frame themselves as the present local outlaws in the tradition of the hanseatic pirates. St. Pauli, however, is home to numerous ethnic and cultural minority groups – which Rattos Locos nevertheless represent as a contemporary reality of Hamburg through their stereotyped images of Afro-German, *Kanaken* and ethnic German skulls on their logo label. In this sense, Rattos Locos do not treat their multicultural neighbourhood as an 'other,' but as part of the German cityspace and hence of the lived Hamburg experience, claiming a post-hybrid German identity.

From the streets of St. Pauli, this statement of local post-hybridity has been spatially expanded by Samy Deluxe. Embedding himself and the art of rap in a German national

narrative, Samy Deluxe orally mimics the German literary tradition through his sophisticated and articulated rhetoric. By strategically framing his rap as *'deutsche Hochkultur,'*[629] Samy Deluxe moreover engages in a social discourse, which elevates rap's status within German culture beyond regional folk traditions or deviant urban lifestyles and revives the connection between rap and '"Reim", "Lyrik", "Dichter", "Poet,"'[630] which, as Cheesman observes, have loomed 'very large among the names of hip hop crews and recordings'[631] in the early German rap stages. With this strategy, the Afro-German rapper thus attempts to show that rap as well as culturally hybrid identities are part of contemporary Germanness.

With rap therefore enabling the lyrical dissemination of many different socio-cultural identity discourses and claims of belonging, this comparative analysis has shown that, with the exception of MicFire, rap's implementation as a culturally meaningful German art form relies on the rapper's German *linguistic orientation* regardless of personal intentions and strategies of 'stigma' management. In line with Mirko Machine's introductory statement, hip-hop's lyrical element has thus, according to Mark Pennay, spurred

> independence and confidence among young Germans that they can create music in German for Germans – the most positive development within postunification Germany of a renaissance within the local music scene, and within which the transmuted and initially contested genre of Rap [sic] has played a key role.[632]

Whether this artistic independence and confidence is shared by graffiti artists in Germany as well will be analysed in the following and final chapter.

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[629] Samy Deluxe, 'Hände Hoch', *Schwarz Weiß* (EMI, 2011), CD.
[630] Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 209.
[631] Ibid.
[632] Pennay, Mark, 'Rap in *Germany*: The Birth of a Genre', in Mitchell, Tony, ed., *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-hop outside the USA* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), pp. 111-33 (p. 128).

5 Graffiti Art

5.1 The Origins of Graffiti Art and Hip-Hop Culture

'I was into graffiti. That's where Kool Herc came from.'[633]

As this chapter turns to the last art form that constitutes the four main elements of hip-hop culture, the introductory statement by DJ Kool Herc addresses the fact that graffiti existed before the art of DJing and hence prior to the establishment of local block parties. Indeed, the term graffiti goes back even further as it has served to describe ancient etchings and drawings 'since man encountered his first stone wall.'[634] Yet, despite the time lapse from the first stone wall until post-industrial New York City of the 1970s, graffiti's spatiality has remained inextricably linked to vertical, material 'firstspaces.' Moreover, graffiti's historicality, as well as the artist's sociality become evident through the etchings and drawings on these 'firstspaces,' as Nelson George concludes that contemporary knowledge on the 'world's early history comes from pictures and symbols scrawled centuries ago.'[635] With hip-hop-related graffiti framed by the same trialetics, this analysis will nevertheless distinguish between ancient mural writings and the contemporary visual artistic element of hip-hop culture by referring to the latter as 'graffiti art' throughout this chapter.

Graffiti art's earliest beginnings are rooted in Philadelphia. During the 1960s, the local tradition of using aerosol spray cans to leave traces on the city's material 'firstspaces' 'took shape as an aesthetic response to changes in the common experience of the modern urban environment.'[636] Spray-painting certain codes mainly functioned as distinct territories markers with which local street gangs communicated group membership and specific urban affiliation.[637] Eventually, however, the repeated appearance of the word 'Cornbread' re-functioned the tradition of using spray-painted symbols as territorial indicators into becoming anonymous presentations of the

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633 Kool Herc in George, Nelson 'Hip-Hop Founding Fathers Speak the Truth', p. 45; according to David Ley and Roman Cybriwsky, the adjective 'cool' in terms of graffiti art 'denotes confidence, style, suavity, a mastery of the intricate signal language of street life,' cf. Ley, David and Roman Cybriwsky, 'Urban Graffiti as Territorial Markers', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 64 (1974), 491-505 (p. 494). Herc was an abbreviation of Hercules, describing Kool Herc's body size; cf. Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), p. 72.

634 George, Nelson, *Hip Hop America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 11.

635 Ibid.

636 Austin, Joe A, 'More to see than a Canvas in a White Cube: For an Art in the Street', *City,* 14 (1), (2010), 33-47 (p. 35).

637 Cf. Ley and Cybriwsky, p. 492.

writer's self, independent of particular street gang practices.[638] Cornbread's spatial ritual eventually reached New York City as well, where graffiti art's appropriation of 'firstspaces' would be treated as 'a set of materialized "spatial practices" that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patternings of urbanism as a way of life.'[639]

In this new cityspace, Rose writes 'the writer credited with inspiring the movement, Taki 183, is a Greek teenager named Demetrius who lived in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan.'[640] Graffiti scholar Craig Castleman further elaborates that 'Taki was an unemployed seventeen year old with nothing better to do than pass the summer days spraying his name wherever he happened to be.'[641] Moving through the metropolitan city of New York and its particular boroughs and neighbourhoods, Taki disrupted the rhythms of citylife by writing 'his name all over the subway cars and stations.'[642] Hence, while the emergence of graffiti art in New York City was deeply tied to the architectonics of the human built environment (cf. THSP: 75), it was detached from the exclusive built environment of the Bronx and hence from a cultural-historical discourse pertaining to African-American and Latino inhabitants, which was previously deemed as the driving cultural force behind DJing, rapping and b-boying.

Furthermore, the expression of graffiti art existed without the presence of the artist's body, especially compared to b-boying or DJing. In other words the sprayer's racial attributes became invisible for the visual consumption of this art form, with emerging graffiti artists presenting their self as spray-painted traces and hence as written identities.[643] In so doing, hip-hop's graffiti artists diverge from Goffman's observations on people's presentations of self, since their art form allows their identities to be managed without face-to-face interaction in the presence of others. Thus, Taki 183 presented his self via the repetitive written pseudonym 'Taki 183,' which laid the foundation of 'the most basic and simplest form of graffiti,'[644] namely 'tagging'.

The practice of tagging not only refers to spreading one's 'tag' in vast quantities but to identifying the artist through the targeted use of personally stylised letters. With the establishment of this practice, local imitators of Taki 183's materialised spatial ritual 'began to develop elaborate individual styles, themes, formats and techniques, most of

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638 Cf. Ibid., p. 493.
639 Soja, *Postmetropolis,* p. 10
640 Rose, p. 42.
641 Castleman, Craig, 'The Politics of Graffiti', in Forman and Neal, eds., *That's the Joint!*, 2nd edn, pp. 14-34 (p. 14); Rose, however, writes that Taki 183 worked as a messenger; cf. Rose p. 42.
642 Rose, p. 42.
643 Cf. MacDonald, p. 215
644 Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 28.

which were designed to increase visibility, individual identity, and status.'[645] This development also spurred the creation of distinct spray-painted fonts, such as the '"bubble letter," fat, rounded letters that were designed and named by Phase II; "3D letter", block letters with a three-dimensional appearance, first used by Pistol 1; and "wild style", a name used to describe almost an "unreadable" style.'[646]

The employment of such fonts also led to newly evolving formats of graffiti art. Thus, the successor of the simple tag became the enlarged 'throw-up,' which was commonly created with the bubble letter font as it 'usually consists of a two- or three-letter name that is formed, usually rounded, into a single unit that can be sprayed quickly and with a minimum of paint on the sides of a train.'[647] This new format therefore also relocated graffiti art's mobile spatiality from being placed inside a subway car to being sprayed on its outside surface. The spatial relocation further enabled graffiti art to become visible to a wider urban public, namely to 'outsiders' in Goffman's terms, while the trains rolled 'through diverse neighbourhoods, allowing communication between various black and Hispanic communities throughout the five boroughs and larger New York population and disseminating graffiti writers' public performance.'[648]

While Rose links graffiti art's new spatial practices and new 'fronts' to an African-American and Latino context, Castleman is more cautious with his observations on graffiti artists' ethnic backgrounds, explaining that 'possibly most writers, are poor blacks, Hispanics, and whites,'[649] yet, overall graffiti artists belonged to 'every race, nationality, and economic group in New York City.'[650] This statement is furthermore affirmed by an officer from the New York Transit Police Department's graffiti squad who notes that graffiti art was being produced by 'kids that live in New York City. They range from the ultra-rich to the ultra-poor. There is no general classification of the kids.'[651] Thus, from the onset of its emergence in New York City, graffiti art addressed a wider range of social and cultural sensibilities beyond the 'thirdspace' of one particular neighbourhood. While the artists' ethnic and social backgrounds were thus irrelevant towards an authentic engagement in graffiti art, its placement on the outside of subway trains became the most important factor towards assessing one's social identity as an artist, with new graffiti formats being specifically tailored to the 'firstspace' surface of the subway car façade.

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[645] Rose, p. 42.
[646] Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 25.
[647] Ibid., p. 29.
[648] Rose, p. 43.
[649] Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 67.
[650] Ibid.
[651] Hickey, Kevin in Castleman, *Getting Up*, p. 67.

These subway-specific formats included the 'top-to-bottom,' which reached from the ground to the top of the subway car, while the 'end-to-end' referred to a piece reaching from one side of the car to the other.[652] The extension of these pieces became the 'whole car,' which, as the name reveals, refers to graffiti art that covers an entire side of a subway car. With the first whole car sprayed in 1973, by the 'mid-1970s the best writers in the city were specializing in the painting of enormous whole-car murals that often contained caricatures, cartoon characters, outdoor scenes, holiday settings, and even the writers' own interpretations of life in the city.'[653] Soon, the creation of such whole cars was considered to be 'the epitome of style and skill, and those writers who achieve them are much admired.'[654] Thus, graffiti art's social discourse in terms of gaining respect became deeply tied to the 'fronts' of its mobile urban 'firstspaces.'

Yet, the new spatial emphasis of graffiti art also influenced another social aspect of the art form beyond gaining a respected social status and individual admiration. It changed the dynamics of writing in solitude to producing graffiti art within a group.[655] As Castleman explains, the immense work required for spraying whole cars led to graffiti art being 'frequently painted by groups who share paint and skills and generally work from a plan drawn in advance that outlines the design and colors to be used.'[656] While graffiti groups had already existed as an outcome of the 'thirdspace' experience of New York City, they previously formed as a direct security measure against violent local street gangs. These early graffiti groups were therefore 'similar to fighting gangs in that they sometimes purposefully engaged in rumbles with other gangs, limited membership to writers from their home turf and, [...] were into territory.'[657] It was not until 1973 – the same year of the first whole car creation – that graffiti art crews were formed for the purpose of practicing art aside from the mere territorial appropriation of urban 'firstspaces.' These crews have since become 'informal in structure, have no hierarchy of officers, do not require members to wear identifying colors,[658] and were not formed for the sake of defence against fighting gangs but only for companionship and occasional joint writing ventures.'[659]

Thus, graffiti art's trialectics of being were deeply influenced and affected by the overall urban dynamics of New York City at the time. Its historicality even begins in this urban

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[652] Rose, p. 42.
[653] Castleman, *Getting Up*, p. 60.
[654] Ibid., p. 36.
[655] Cf. Ibid., p. 84.
[656] Ibid., p. 35.
[657] Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 96.
[658] 'Colors' refer to the colour marked on one's jacket or vest that signified membership to a specific gang. B-boy crews initially mimicked this colour identification code, as well. Cf. Banes, p. 128.
[659] Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 107.

realm, namely as a spatial response to the lifestyles pertaining specifically to the multifaceted post-industrial US-American metropolis. It is this modern urban environment which, according to historian Joe Austin, 'appears within, shapes and partially constitutes the artwork itself. The city and its myriad writings are fundamental contextual references, without which graffiti art is poorly understood.'[660] The only initial commonality between hip-hop's main artistic elements was therefore the shared cityspace of New York and its all-encompassing urban 'thirdspace' experience, which nurtured the personal hunger to gain social respect while providing a distraction of everyday life through an engagement in art.

Graffiti art's maturity and vibrant movement eventually mobilised it to be integrated as a hip-hop element. According to DJ Kool Herc, 'I was the guy with the art. I liked graffiti flyers. My graffiti friend used to do my flyers.'[661] With Kool Herc being the initiator, local DJs began turning to graffiti art as a marketing tool for the promotion of their neighbourhood block parties. Graffiti writers began to paint 'murals for DJ's stage platforms and design posters and flyers to advertise hip hop events.'[662] However, as DJ Afrika Bambaataa explains, it was not until the early 1980s when New York City's urban art movements became commercialised and marketed outside of their home territory that 'everything started coming into place, we started doing shows and traveling into different boroughs. Then we started traveling to different states and that's when we threw it all together.'[663]

Framed as a united hip-hop movement, graffiti art finally became globally disseminated as its visual element and has since been able to create 'a culturally rich visual history'[664] pertaining to various urban spatialities. Consequentially, according to Austin, graffiti art's 'collectively sustained duration, its historically complex social and institutional development, and its aesthetic sophistication place it among the longest-running, global visual culture movements originating within the 20th century, and perhaps **the most** important of the last decades.'[665] In the following section, this visual cultural movement will be explored in its German manifestation with close readings of graffiti art focussing on typographical aspects with which to understand better the various social, spatial and historical perspectives of graffiti art's urban expression in a contemporary German cultural context.

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[660] Austin, p. 38.
[661] George, 'Hip-Hop's Founding Fathers speak the Truth', p. 45.
[662] Rose, p. 35.
[663] George, 'Hip-Hop's Founding Fathers speak the Truth', p. 45.
[664] Austin, p. 35.
[665] Ibid.

5.2 Reading the Typographic Style of Graffiti Art

The idea that style in connection to specific materiality is able to signify and to communicate a social identity has not only been subject to graffiti art's norms and practices. It has, indeed, been linked to typography in general, for linguist Hartmut Stoeckl explains that typography is both 'Stilmittel und soziales Signal.'[666] Taking Stoeckl's views on typography as a blueprint on which to analyse graffiti art's trialectics of being in a German cultural context, this analysis will implement four main typographic categories defined by Stoeckl to close readings of graffiti art works in Germany. These consist of *micro-, meso-, macro- and paratypography.*

Microtypography comprises the most basic degree of typographic features, which Stoeckl refers to as the formal structures of letters and symbols, such as font, style, colour or size.[667] In graffiti art, this category of typography applies to the stylistic choice of the personalised font in terms of the 'way you write your name, the letters you use, their shape, flow and form, the colours you choose.'[668]

Mesotypography, on the other hand, captures the composition of a text on a surface, such as the spacing of letters.[669] In graffiti art, the composition of a text is often defined by the format, such as the creation of tags, throw-ups or more elaborate pieces. German graffiti scholar Stefan Meier further notes that focussing on the *mesotypography* of a graffiti art piece may reveal the graffiti writer's technical ability and experience. If, for instance, letters leave drips and traces of running paint on the remaining surface, which interfere with the *mesotypographic* layout of the piece, it can be deduced that this piece was created by a beginner who has not had much spray can control.[670]

The third category of *macrotypography* relates to the creative organisation of textual units. Creativity is often expressed through the addition of images, figures and caricatures.[671] In graffiti art, *macrotypographical* elements usually serve to enhance the visual impact of a written name or message by adding 'decorations that are frequently worked into the letters of a name, ranging from simple lines, swirls, arrows, and stars to highly complex caricatures and other drawings.'[672]

In order for these three typographic aspects to be identifiable as belonging to the graffiti art movement, the last category of *paratypography* becomes the most relevant,

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666 Stoeckl, p. 7.
667 Cf. Ibid., p. 22.
668 MacDonald, p. 71.
669 Cf. Stoeckl, p. 22.
670 Cf. Meier, Stefan, 'Stylelife: Graffiti als „typographisches" Ausdrucksmittel sozialen Stils' in Kimminich, Rappe, Geuen, and Pfänder, eds., *Express yourself!*, pp. 193-208 (p. 202).
671 Cf. Stoeckl, p. 22.
672 Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 25.

as it links graffiti art to its urban context. Stoeckl divides *paratypography* into 'die beiden Kategorien Material und Praktik des Signierens. Das Material bezeichnet dabei die stoffliche Qualität des Zeichenträgers, die Praktik des Signierens bezieht sich auf verfügbare Herstellungsverfahren, d.h. auf Techniken und benötigte Werkzeuge zum „Zeichenmachen."'[673] *Paratypography* therefore pertains to the materiality of a text in terms of the tools employed to create it, as well as to the 'firstspace' surface on which graffiti art is placed, with Castleman stating that the 'style that one displays on the trains means the most.'[674] Stoeckl's latter *paratypographic* category refers to the aerosol spray paint, which, according to Greenbaum and Rubinstein, 'came in small, easy-to-conceal, easy-to-steal cans. It was paint and brush in one. It dried quickly. It worked well on building materials and subway cars.'[675]

With these four typographic categories at hand, Meier, for instance, distinguishes between the different social aspirations of individual graffiti artists, noting that '[w]ährend es gilt, auf mikro- und mesotypografischer Ebene einen möglichst markanten, unverwechselbaren Schriftzug zu entwickeln, markiert man auf paratypografischer Ebene bestimmte Stadtbezirke als „Reviere", hinterlässt Spuren auf den Streifzügen und macht so innerhalb und außerhalb der Szene auf sich aufmerksam.'[676] This analysis will take the use of typography towards understanding graffiti art one step further, namely by applying it towards close readings of graffiti art's social, as well as its spatial and historical relevance within German cultural contexts. After a brief introduction on graffiti art's adaptation in West Germany, the following comparative analysis will examine the way this element of hip-hop has been appropriated in Hamburg and in Oldenburg, and how it has influenced the visual experience of these contemporary German cityspaces.

5.3 The Visibility of Graffiti Art in West Germany

‚Das ist unsere Kunst gerade zurzeit. Das ist unser Stil. Das ist unsere Generation einfach.'[677]

This statement by Hamburg graffiti artist Tasek not only reveals graffiti art's presence in Germany but highlights its importance for contemporary German artists ever since it

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673 Stoeckl, p. 37.
674 Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 21.
675 Greenbaum, Hilary, and Dana Rubinstein, 'The Origin of Spray Paint', *New York Times Magazine* (The New York Times, 4 November 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/06/magazine/who-made-spraypaint.html> [accessed 9 October 2013].
676 Meier, pp. 204/5.
677 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.

reached West Germany as part of the mediated hip-hop movement in the 1980s. With the practice of spraying letters on urban surfaces being influenced by New York City graffiti art's socio-spatial norms, different West German graffiti communities quickly adapted distinct fonts in order to become identifiable within West Germany's urban landscape. West Berlin's graffiti community, for example, was known for adhering to the 'wild style' font,[678] while Hamburg as well as German cities from the Ruhr area became known for their creation of a distinct German 'simple style.'[679] This style was also referred to as the 'Dortmund style,' since Dortmund's graffiti community employed it in the most unscrupulous and unrelenting ways.[680] According to Tasek, this simple style was

> ein typischer Bombingsstyle,[681] den man halt nachts viel gemacht hat. Das waren halt ganz geradlinige Letters mit ganz dicken Outlines. Alles ganz perfekt und sauber exekutiert. Ganz simple Farben reingefüllt. Nicht großartig irgendwelche Fadings und Ge-*shizzl*, und gar nicht viel Characters und so was, sondern einfach nur straighte Blockletters sozusagen. Mit einem bisschen Swing drinne. Aber halt sehr geradlinig letztendlich so. Also fast Deutschland-typisch sozusagen.[682]

By linking the *micro*- and *macrotypographical* features of the Dortmund style to an overall German stereotype, Tasek engages in a cultural discourse that can be understood as a 'form of splitting and multiple belief, [which] requires, for its successful signification, a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes' (LOC: 110). This is established through the repetitive sequence of straight and perfectly executed spray-painted lines. Its successful signification is further enhanced through the iterative pattern of the 'bombing' tradition, which ensures high visibility to 'outsiders.' Thus, the German simple style became known for the

> Qualität der technischen Umsetzung und die Quantität durch die nächtlichen Umsetzungen. Dadurch war das auf jeden Fall echt eine massive Sache. Und die auch plötzlich dafür gesorgt hat, dass da echt alle plötzlich auch hingeguckt haben so: ‚Was machen denn die deutschen Verrückten da so? Da geht ja mächtig was!'[683]

With Hamburg graffiti writer Delles concluding that 'was typisch deutsch ist, ist so dieser Dortmund Style,'[684] the stereotypically German attributes characterising this style compellingly parallels the initial German adaptation of b-boying as 'straight

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[678] Cf. Deppe, Jürgen and Odem, *Odem - On the Run: Eine Jugend in der Graffiti-Szene* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1997), pp. I-IX and p. 161; cf. Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012; cf. Asek, interviewed by author, 21 March 2012.
[679] Cf. Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[680] Cf. Deppe and Odem, p. 263 and p. 291.
[681] 'Bombing' refers to the practice of producing large quantities of illegal graffiti.
[682] Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[683] Ibid.
[684] Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

German power.' The characteristics of the Dortmund style typography and the kinaesthetics of the straight German power tradition perform the same qualities in terms of clean execution and the creation of straight lines, which provided the art forms with a German national identity. Yet, while in b-boying these characteristics could have been a logical cultural consequence of an existing tradition of gymnastics, no prior national artistic tradition can be identified as having been influential for Germany's simple graffiti style. Rather, Moe states that 'manche von meinen Jungs aus der Crew, die sind eben an Kunst nur über Graffiti rangekommen.'[685] Indeed, the aesthetic appearance of the simple style's 'throw-up' formats was secondary to its efficient function of visibility. Nevertheless, Delles stresses that German artists invented a national style that was 'innovativ. Sind wohl nicht die schönsten Buchstaben, aber es ist was Eigenes.'[686] Thus, while 'straight German power' was criticised by Jango as lacking 'das gewisse Eigene,'[687] the independently created German graffiti style was understood as being just that: unique.

Yet, this uniqueness did not prove strong enough to withstand other aesthetic impulses. By the late 1990s, and hence after German unification, West German graffiti art departed from its previous nationally representative style by transcending into an aesthetic of pluralism. One reason for this transformation was the changing forces of its forms of spatial communication, for the advent of the Internet opened up wider possibilities for exchanging and experiencing graffiti art beyond the 'firstspaces' of its production sites. Through the creation of online graffiti art platforms such as 'streetfiles,' as well as its successor 'streetpins,' which is described as 'a photo sharing community for streetart & graffiti artists and all other interested people,'[688] photographic images of graffiti art murals, canvases and trains were able to be instantly globally disseminated. The artists' aims have moved beyond creating and maintaining 'lokale Stile, wo die Leute sich beeinflussen. [Graffiti] folgt zwar immer noch denselben Regeln, aber der Spielplatz ist verändert worden, weil durch das Internet ist das eine völlig dezentralisierte Geschichte geworden.'[689]

This spatial decentralisation has not only had an impact on the creation of distinct local fonts and styles but also on the consumption of graffiti art, with Moe explaining that

> Streetfiles hat Graffiti nach Hause auf deinen Bildschirm gebracht und ist eine sehr bequeme Sache und für jemand wie ich, der so gut wie keine Freizeit

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685 Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012; this statement refers to his crew in West Berlin.
686 Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
687 Cf. Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.
688 Cf. Anonymous, 'Graffiti & Streetart Photo Community', *Streetpins.com | Graffiti & Streetart Photo Community* (Streetpins, 2013) <http://www.streetpins.com/> [accessed 2 October 2013].
689 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.

> mehr besitzt wegen Familie und Vollzeitjob und noch ehrenamtliche Arbeit ist es unmöglich, dass ich alle [Graffiti] *Places* aufsuche.[690]

While these changing dynamics influence contemporary practices of graffiti art, Tasek emphasises that the task of a graffiti artist is to engage in these changes and to produce graffiti art in ways that are meaningful in the contemporary cultural presence. He elaborates that '[j]e mehr *true to the old school* die Leute auch über Jahre geblieben sind, desto cooler ist das zwar irgendwie, aber dann ist das halt immer noch nicht authentisch, weil wenn du etwas stilecht kopierst macht dich das noch nicht zum authentischen Künstler.'[691] As graffiti art has become 'eine Identifikation' for contemporary German artists, Tasek concludes that this only happens if it is 'aus dir selbst entstanden im Abgleich mit deinem Umfeld und deiner Umgebung und deinen Fragen.'[692] The strategies with which graffiti art has therefore become relevant for contemporary German artists and their urban environments will be explored in the following comparative analysis.

5.4 Hamburg and the Metropolitan Messages of Graffiti Art

Graffiti art's beginnings in Hamburg remain captured on Hamburg's 'firstspaces' until today. Delles explains that 'der erste wirklich bekannte Sprüher aus Hamburg, der wirklich Buchstaben gemalt hat, das war Eric. Es gibt auch immer noch Bilder, wie am Berliner Tor [...] von 1984 oder so,'[693] coinciding with the year in which hip-hop was being introduced through US-American films. Yet, early graffiti art in Hamburg was also influenced by the circulation of hard-copy graffiti sketches created by Shoe, a writer from Amsterdam, and Bando from Paris.[694] This Eurocentric influence is comparable to Britcore's relevance for Hamburg's early hip-hop sound. While more drawings from Shoe and hence from the closer Dutch border spread throughout Hamburg, this European intervention led to the fact that 'von denselben Sachen basierend etwas Eigenes entwickelt wurde, oder eigene Swings und Flows entwickelt [wurden],'[695] beyond solely mimicking US-American graffiti art fonts. Yet, the aforementioned virtual visibility of stylistic approaches has led to the outcome that 'diesen klassischen Hamburg Stil, den gibt es so nicht mehr.'[696] While once known for its unique and

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690 Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012
691 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
692 Ibid.
693 Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
694 Cf. Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012; cf. Davis, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
695 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
696 Ibid.

individual simple block letter graffiti fonts, local graffiti artist Davis now describes Hamburg's cityspace as home to a *'multikulti'* style.[697]

While *multikulti* in Germany has been declared dead by Germany's leading conservative politicians, it remains very much alive in the cityspace of Hamburg. Here, *multikulti* in the sense of graffiti art, on the one hand, refers to the pluralism of styles that have converged from different cultures and different cityspaces. On the other hand, it is also the case that Hamburg's sprayer community comprises many cultural backgrounds. Davis specifically names Turkish, Polish, Russian and ethnic German as the main ethnic groups.[698] In a humorous account, he asserts that local hip-hop artists of African descent remain relatively absent in this element and rather engage in hip-hop dance, as this art form supposedly resonates more meaningfully with their natural physique and cultural background.[699] While such ironic statements hint at an alleged division of cultures, the general consensus nevertheless reveals that, similar to graffiti art's social discourse in New York City, it is irrelevant whether one is 'schwarz, weiß, reich, arm, krank, gesund, groß, klein, dick, dünn, Mann oder Frau […]. Das spielt einfach alles keine Rolle.'[700] The important aspect in gaining a respected social identity as a graffiti artist in Hamburg is therefore based on the creation of an individual typographic style presented on selected 'fronts' pertaining to urban 'firstspaces.'

These urban 'firstspaces' also include mobile train canvases, since the size of Hamburg's cityspace requires a railway transit system for inner-urban transportation. Indeed, Eric's historical graffiti piece already shows that Hamburg's early writers immediately imitated the original metropolitan discourse of graffiti art by writing on rail traffic terrain.[701] However, unlike New York City's traditional subway canvases, Hamburg's train graffiti pieces have been placed on urban railway cars rather than on its subway line. This substitution of mobile urban 'firstspaces' is due to the urban train system's low number of circulating cars, which provide a greater chance for a top-to-bottom or a whole car to run, since the subway line has enough cars to exchange a spray-painted one immediately after its detection by authorities.[702] In other words, the same symbolic value of visibility that was previously attached to New York City's subway spatiality has been inscribed on Hamburg's urban railway cars which disseminate graffiti art throughout the northern German metropolis. An example is

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697 Davis, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
698 Cf. Ibid.
699 Cf. Ibid.; while over half of the active, independent hip-hop dancers training in Hamburg in 2012 were of African descent it remains problematic to locate their interest in dance solely in their ethnic heritage.
700 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
701 'Berliner Tor' is the name of a subway and an urban railway station in Hamburg.
702 Cf. Udu, interviewed by author, 13 May 2012.

provided by the whole car created by graffiti group BK, who not only adapt graffiti art's socio-spatial practices to their local German cityspace, but also fuse them with a cultural-historical discourse pertaining to a German cultural context (see Figure 8). A close reading of this piece will highlight the typographic strategies that were chosen in order to create this culturally hybrid, yet nevertheless German graffiti art piece.

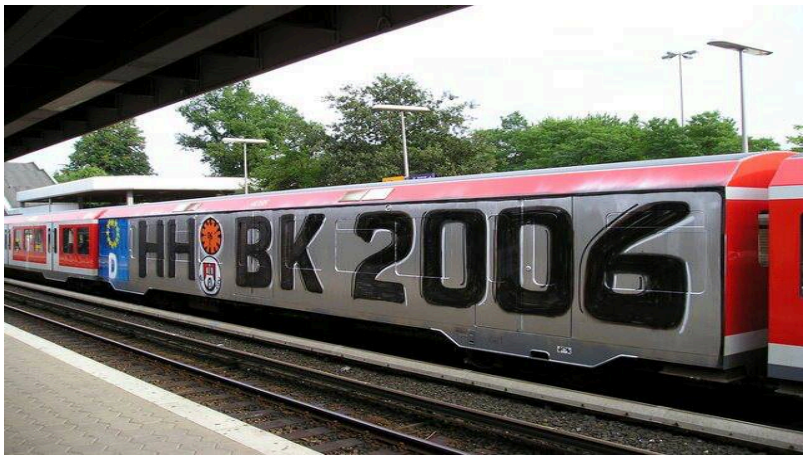

Figure 8: A 'whole car' by BK on Hamburg's urban railway line

The black outline around the train car serves to define the canvas' elongated rectangular shape which at the same time imitates the conventional format of a German vehicle registration plate. The silver filling within the outline further offers a contrast to the four black letters and four black numbers situated in the frame. The letters and digits specifically adhere to the *microtypographic 'FE-Schrift'* (*fälschungserschwerende Schrift),* which has been employed on German license plates since 2000. The piece's *mesotypography* also follows the established arrangement of the vehicle registration codes: the letters 'HH' on the left are the abbreviation for 'Hansestadt Hamburg.' The remaining letter combinations serve to present the graffiti crew's identity, while the numbers capture the piece's year of creation.

The inclusion of *macrotypographical* symbols further adds to the faithful replication of the vehicle registration plate. Germany's countrycode 'D' sprayed in white paint is located on a blue strip to the far left side of the canvas above which a ring of twelve yellow stars symbolises the flag of Europe. Other *mesotypographic* accents include two circles placed above each other between Hamburg's prefix and BK's name. The top orange circle replicates the safety inspection seal, whereby the orange colour signifies its fictional expiration date in 2007 adding a realistic touch to the fact that the license

plate imitation was made in 2006.[703] Below, Hamburg's white and red coat of arms represents Hamburg's status as a city-state.

This highly detailed and sophisticated whole car thus infuses graffiti art's norms and practices with German cultural signification. While from a spatial perspective the choice of the 'firstspace' of the Hamburg urban train façade as well as the piece's format become a meaningful social sign for the local graffiti community, the creativity of the whole car becomes evident when reading it as a 'secondspatial' representation of contemporary Germany, signified through the symbolic codes of German registration plates. Therefore, BK's metropolitan message rests on knowledge pertaining to a contemporary German cultural context. From a historical perspective, the piece's message moreover only makes sense in its contemporaneity, enabled by the invention of motorised vehicles as a consequence of the urban industrialisation of society. More specifically, the historicality of this piece dates back to 2000 when the *microtypography* of the license plates became established.

At the same time, the codes can also be read anew from a social perspective as they come to signify the successful act of illegally creating a whole car. BK ridicule officialdom by re-functioning the usefulness of the codes pertaining to official registration laws to represent their deviant social behaviour as local German citizens. By blending these two cultural knowledges into one graffiti art form, BK ultimately create a 'third space,' which 'challenges the binary that separated the containment of meaning within an artwork and the establishment of a framework for making meaning within culture, by suggesting that both art and culture are in a reflexive process that is co-constitutive.'[704]

This co-constitutiveness of German culture and graffiti art is also traceable beyond BK's whole car and its circulation through Hamburg. Sprayer OZ, for example, engaged in the same appropriation of mobile 'firstspaces' in order to re-negotiate the binary of art and culture.[705] Delles highlights that 'du siehst *überall* OZ'[706] elaborating that 'im Endeffekt hat er alle Lines, alle S-Bahnen, alle Yards hat der abgedeckt. Und das hat kein weiterer Sprüher bis jetzt hinbekommen.'[707] Yet, in contrast to the communal works of BK, OZ

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[703] Cf. Anonymous, 'Anlage IX (zu § 29 Absatz 2, 3, 5 bis 8) – Prüfplakette für die Untersuchung von Kraftfahrzeugen und Anhängern', *StVZO* (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 2012) <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stvzo_2012/anlage_ix_139.html> [accessed 10 September 2013].

[704] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 47.

[705] OZ died on 25 September 2014.

[706] Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

[707] Ibid.

had been spraying in solitude in Hamburg since the mid-1980s.[708] Since then he has visually dominated Hamburg's cityspace through his vast amount of spray-painted traces, which appear most commonly as black smiley faces or as his tag OZ created by two connecting letters spray-painted in black ink with a dot acting as a *macrotypographic* marker placed in the lower elbow of the Z (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Smiley Face and Tag by OZ

The dissemination of these social symbols has provided OZ with the local status of being 'Weltmeister von Hamburg sozusagen. Also was Quantität angeht.'[709] Yet, the main difference between OZ's approach to German graffiti art in contrast to BK is not only his individual engagement but that OZ gained his reputation without adhering to graffiti art's typographic norms, aside from its *paratypography*. As Tasek explains, OZ's presentation of self has not been 'über Stil, nicht über Szene-Affinität oder *Realness* oder *Coolness* irgendwie entstanden, sondern einfach nur [über] harte Fakten und zwar in Masse.'[710] Rather than writing stylised letters in order to communicate a social identity within the local graffiti community, OZ's tags, smiley faces as well as his abstract designs,[711] which do 'not depict recognizable scenes or objects, but instead

[708] Cf. Gall, Insa, and Martin Kopp, 'Der Sprayer Von OZ', *DIE WELT* (Die Welt Online, 16 December 1999) http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article593031/Der-Sprayer-von-OZ.html [accessed 2 October 2013].
[709] Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[710] Ibid.
[711] OZ's artistic output beyond smiley faces and his tag comprise painted surfaces made up of circles and dots placed on colourful backgrounds.

[are] made up of forms and colours that exist for their own expressive sake,'[712] served to bring colour into 'das braune Deutschland.'[713] With Hamburg's contemporary architecture and human geography supposedly tainted by the country's politically 'brown' Nazi history, OZ's performative claim to this urban 'firstspace' becomes a material discourse grounded in a historical context.

OZ's politically-charged *paratypographical* demonstration also reveals itself as his voiceless form of communication. On the one hand, his graffiti art was able to mask his 'abomination of the body,' namely the 'attribute' of his cleft lip, which inhibits a proper pronunciation of the German language.[714] On the other hand, the colouring of Hamburg's 'firstspace' further became a strategy with which to manage OZ's 'tribal stigma' of Jewish heritage. As a newspaper article in *Die Welt* reports:

> Der Sprayer und sein Hass auf die Nazis: Elternlos aufgewachsen in Heimen, beharrt er seit Jahren darauf, Jude zu sein - vielleicht gerade, weil sich der Mann ohne Herkunft eine solche verschaffen möchte. ‚Im Heim hat man mir erzählt, meine Mutter wäre Jüdin,' behauptet er.[715]

Thus, OZ's choice of style served to react visibly against (neo-)Nazism, with abstract art having been banned in Nazi Germany for not conforming to a supposed German artistic aesthetic. By visually challenging the German historical present, OZ's urban oeuvre and spatial narrative opens up a 'third space,' which 'refers to the visible manifestation of difference within identity as a consequence of the incorporation of foreign elements.'[716] While successfully re-functioning graffiti art's foreign *paratypographic* norms and practices into a socio-historical discourse pertaining to Germany, OZ's identity as a graffiti artist has nevertheless remained ambivalent within the local hip-hop community. His choice of *paratypography*, as well as the visibility of traces and the creation of an 'innovativer Style'[717] have become 'für viele aus der Graffitiszene ein Qualitätsmerkmal sozusagen, was ihm Heroenstatus eingebracht hat.'[718] Yet, at the same time, OZ was 'trotzdem nie so wirklich ein Teil einer Szene'[719] due to his 'Stilistik und durch seine Ausnahmestellung.'[720]

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[712] Chilvers, Ian, 'Abstract Art', *The Oxford Dictionary of Art,* 3rd edn (Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxfordreference.com> [accessed 26 May 2014].
[713] Cf. Udu, interviewed by author, 13 May 2012; brown was the colour of the former German NSDAP party.
[714] Cf. Udu, interviewed by author, 13 May 2012; Gall and Kopp write that OZ was 'wegen seiner Gaumenspalte als „Teufelsbrut" gebrandmarkt.' Cf. Gall and Kopp.
[715] Cf. Gall and Kopp.
[716] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 40.
[717] Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
[718] Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Ibid.

Nevertheless, in the end, OZ's expressive power has become 'einfach ein Metakonstrukt geworden dadurch, dass es so politisch für die Stadt Relevanz bekommen hat.'[721] In other words, OZ's personal approach to graffiti art has created a local identity for the German cityspace of Hamburg beyond a hip-hop-related context. Its relevance as an urban identity marker is summarised in the slogan 'Hamburg ohne OZ …ist München!'[722] which circulated on a sign-post in front of Hamburg's court room during OZ's hearing in 2011.[723]

While some members of Hamburg's graffiti community have honoured OZ's quantitative engagement by providing him with the status of world champion, local artist DAIM has gained the same status in terms of his qualitative approach to graffifi art, namely for becoming 'weltweit bekannt für 3-Ds.'[724] DAIM became initially involved in graffiti art through an interest in hip-hop culture as well as through a previous fascination for the art works of Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dalí and of Dutch post-impressionist painter Vincent Villem van Gogh. Through this latter interest, DAIM acquired an understanding for different techniques of paint application and of visual effects beyond the defining aesthetics of graffiti art. With these insights, DAIM began to ask himself: 'Warum muss eigentlich immer die klassische schwarze Outline um die ganzen Buchstaben rumgesprüht werden?'[725] In investigating this aesthetic custom DAIM omitted the classic black outline when spraying letters, which had previously been an identity marker of the Dortmund style. Rather, DAIM chose to construe his letters through variations of shade and light and different hues of colour.[726]

Thus, while OZ challenged the socio-historical discourses of graffiti art through his quantitative approach, DAIM rather ruptures graffiti art's previously established aesthetic boundaries, posing

> powerful questions about the effects of difference within cultural objects, the process of incorporating foreign symbols or utilizing different media and the articulation of a critique against domination. Much of the debate around these kinds of artistic practices has tended to take an absolute position, with critics

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721 Ibid.

722 Anonymous, Picture #5, 'Streetart-Mythos OZ: Die Stadt Als Galerie', *SPIEGEL ONLINE Fotostrecke* (Spiegel.de, 29 July 2011) <http://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/streetart-mythos-oz-die-stadt-als-galerie-fotostrecke-71007-5.html> [accessed 10 September 2013].

723 Oz was in court and in prison on multiple occasions due to his graffiti art output, with many people demonstrating against his conviction. The issue is whether OZ should be understood as an artist or as a vandal, which is how the local authorities of Hamburg view him.

724 Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.

725 DAIM, 'Opel Corsa – DAIM & Loomit Interview (German)', *DAIM* (YouTube, 24 January 2011) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZJfbiUDgY8> [accessed 20 September 2013].

726 Cf. Ibid.

> either celebrating the mobility of culture or mourning the loss of authenticity.[727]

In line with Papastergiadis' observations, DAIM's three-dimensional approach was initially dismissed by other German graffiti writers who mourned the loss of the supposed authentic practice of graffiti art, deeming his typographic style as not being graffiti art, at all.[728] Yet, DAIM was able to mitigate this apprehensive reaction by adhering to the spatiality of graffiti art as well as to the social discourse of presenting himself through the continual repetition of his style with which he could repeatedly 'show new sides of graffiti art.'[729] In so doing, DAIM's technique has provided him with a style, 'den man sofort, ob man von tausend Meter oder von fünf Meter entfernt, sofort lesen kann,'[730] fulfilling the ultimate objective of a skilled graffiti writer.[731]

By having 'gotten up,' meaning having gained 'recognition and acceptance of [his] work by other writers (and possibly the public in general),'[732] DAIM, together with Tasek and colleague Heiko Zahlmann, have furthermore transcended from graffiti art's illegality to making it their legal profession. In line with this development, the three artists have founded the graffiti artist association 'Getting Up.' The institution thus provides 'back' regions where the artists are able to plan, practise and perfect their technical skills as professionals, which also includes preparing art works for art gallery exhibitions. This, in turn, serves to elevate their social status as artists beyond the hip-hop community. Indeed, the 'secondspatial' hip-hop identity of the artist association 'Getting Up' becomes especially relevant towards determining Tasek's art works, since his pieces are 'inzwischen von der Form her ziemlich weit weg [...] von Graffiti, aber [beziehen] sich halt immer eben noch auf dieselben Gesetzmäßigkeiten.'[733]

By adhering to graffiti art's trialectics, such as to the spatiality where 'Dinge draußen entstehen und dass Dinge auch schnell wieder vergehen'[734] as well as 'die Stadt als multiplen Platz wahrzunehmen,'[735] Tasek has re-negotiated graffiti art's normative typographic guidelines by moving 'wie ein Wanderer zwischen den Welten, wie ein Nomade.'[736] Discovering this grey area situated between graffiti art's cultural relevance

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727 Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', pp. 45/6.
728 Cf. DAIM, 'ARTotale "Die Kunst der Kontrolle" PART 1 – Leuphana Urban-Art Project Lüneburg', *Reinkingprojekte* (YouTube, 16 March 2010) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v_ak4GZVkg> [accessed 20 September 2013].
729 DAIM, *DAIM: Daring to Push the Boundaries* (Hamburg, Billhorner Brückenstr. 40: M. Reisser, 2004), p. 6.
730 Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012.
731 Cf. MacDonald, p. 71.
732 Castleman, *Getting Up*, p. 19.
733 Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
734 Ibid.
735 Ibid.
736 Ibid.

and its spatial and stylestic boundaries, Tasek elaborates that 'ab da hat Hip-Hop für mich Sinn gemacht als Szene und als Identifikation für mich. Und das versuche ich halt heutzutage als urbanen Künstler in meinen Arbeiten auch weiterzutragen.'[737] An example of this grey zone is found in the legal communal graffiti piece 'Repeat,' which Tasek created in Hamburg together with DAIM and Heiko Zahlmann, as well as with Berlin graffiti artist Stohead in 2010 (see Figure 10). A close reading of this piece will further elaborate on the typographic strategies employed by Tasek with which he aims to address stylistically his 'soziale Fragen, politische Fragen, natürlich auch existenzielle Fragen.'[738]

The piece spans over multiple walls leading into the entry of an underground car park in the Hamburg district of Altona. While it comprises the artists' individual graffiti styles, such as DAIM's recognisable 3D design, their unity is *microtypographically* expressed through the use of the same colour combinations. The background of the piece is thus painted in orange and yellow hues, while the individual styles are mainly presented in shades of white and grey, as well as in orange and yellow.

Figure 10: 'Repeat'

[737] Ibid.
[738] Ibid.

Tasek's contribution to this mural consists of white letters that create the word 'REPEAT'. It appears in different *microtypographic* sizes, yet always in the same straight, angular shapes. The gaps within the capitalised letters R, P and A are moreover filled with white paint. The piece's *mesotypography* is characteristed by the word's random and repeated appearance throughout the cemented *paratypogaphic* surface. This includes partial overlapping of the individual words as well as of *mesotypographic* interruptions through white lines of paint dripping from one letter onto the one placed below. From a typographic perspective then, Tasek's letters are not a reflection of graffiti art's emphasis on creating a personal identity through a distinct flow and swing of letters. Rather, his letters are rigid and fixed with dripping paint further challenging the supposed skill of a graffiti artist. This aspect becomes especially interesting when regarding Tasek's performance as a graffiti artist who has 'gotten up' precisely because of his talent and skill, yet who now even replaces the spray can for a paint roller with which to write his letters.

By re-articulating graffiti art's stylestic norms while remaining within the familiar spatial framework, Tasek's grey zone and the newness and meaningfulness that emerges from it is furthermore enhanced by the piece's contemporary social discourse. Inspired by the 'thirdspace' experience of the 'repetitive aspects of urban life,'[739] the graffiti artist explains that the

> mantric repetition of the term 'repeat' reflects complex, constantly changing social structures, and simultaneously reduces these to one self-denominating formula: Repeat. A motif that is completely separated from place, content and function, but that nevertheless consistently follows its own rules; a motif trapped in itself.[740]

The aesthetic expression of the trapped motif further mimics the iterative graffiti art practice of tagging with the difference being the dissemination of a verb rather than a personal pseudonym. Moreover, while the mural becomes a 'firstspace' that at the same time influences the 'thirdspace' experience within Hamburg, the fact that the motif is supposed to present a separation from a distinct cityspace highlights the

> difficulties in defining the sense of place in the context of art [through] the strategic use of boundaries in new kinds of artistic practice. The juxtaposition of different signs and the contrast of alternative perspectives are not only recurring features in the composition of artworks but also strategies that

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[739] Anonymous, 'Repeat – Tiefgarageneinfahrt', *Getting-up* (Gettingup.de, 18 October 2010) <http://getting-up.org/en/2010/10/repeat_tiefgarageneinfahrt/> [accessed 20 September 2013].

[740] Peters, Gerrit (Tasek), *The Artists* (Gettingup.de, n.d.) <http://getting-up.org/en/artists/gerrit-peters-tasek/> [accessed 20 September 2013].

> artists utilize in order to provoke new forms of cross-cultural communication.[741]

In the spatial narrative of 'Repeat', such forms of cross-cultural communication are evident through the strategic employment of English as a global linguistic sign, with which Tasek is able to disseminate his metropolitan message beyond urban and even national boundaries. However, in so doing, the message simultaneously detaches the graffiti art piece from a German urban 'firstspace.' In other words, from a spatial perspective, the mural can only become a German cultural sign by encountering it as a 'thirdspace' experience in its territorial location where its social meaning relates to a historicality pertaining to any contemporary urban lifestyle in which the repetitiveness as well as the anonymity of metropolitan life is socially expressed through Tasek's iterative yet at the same time unpersonal style. This hybrid measure does therefore 'not point to an ideal stage of accomplishment, but rather to the process of critical interaction that occurs within and against the structure of a binary.'[742] In critically interacting with the norms and practices of graffiti art, Tasek's ambivalent positioning within the traditional graffiti art movement has estranged the art form through its contact with other cultural presences, while making it relevant for spatial, social and historical discourses pertaining to contemporary global, urban 'thirdspace' experiences.

Hence, as an interim summary to the first analysis on graffiti art's appropriation in Hamburg, close readings of hip-hop's visual art form have illustrated the variety of social, spatial and historical discourses expressed through graffiti art. However, these close readings have also revealed a slight divergence in graffiti art's and the artists' relationships to hip-hop culture. Since graffiti art has always existed before and thereafter parallel to hip-hop, it remains a relative of hip-hop with not every expression of graffiti art fitting into the framework of hip-hop culture's intentions and motivations. Nevertheless, spatiality has remained the most important feature with which to determine a writer's engagement in this art form. In so doing, the spatial functions have been adapted to Hamburg's cityspace while the metropolitan messages have been grounded in multicultural social, spatial and historical discourses pertaining to Hamburg and Germany, as well as to Europe and beyond. Four examples of local graffiti art, ranging from communal to individual, as well as from legal to illegal pieces, have served to highlight the aesthetic and typographic strategies taken in order to make graffiti art meaningful as a contemporary art movement. They have shown that Hamburg's graffiti art style has become a pluralistic and cosmopolitan, which was previously defined by Davis as a *multikulti* style. Indeed, Tasek characterises his local

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[741] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 46.
[742] Ibid., p. 62.

writing community as 'weltoffen [...], zwar reserviert, aber doch offen, und tolerant.'[743] Yet, at the same time, this cultural and artistic open-mindedness has also blurred the art form's identifiable Germanness, compared to its previous 'simple style.' Whether this only relates to Hamburg will be explored in the following analysis, which examines graffiti art's manifestation in the contrasting cityspace of Oldenburg.

5.5 Oldenburg and the Provincial Messages of Graffiti Art

Graffiti art in Oldenburg started to appear between 1989 and 1990[744] thus dating six years later than graffiti art's first visible traces in Hamburg. Nevertheless, despite the delay, Moe stresses that graffiti art 'fing an und das ist für so eine große Stadt doch relativ früh.'[745] With the hype of the first hip-hop films having already passed, the rise of Oldenburg's graffiti art was rather indebted to 'zwei, drei wirklich gute Maler, [die] zu der Zeit aktiv waren.'[746] With only three artists needed to transform the 'firstspaces' of Oldenburg into a colourful 'thirdspace' experience, local graffiti artist Sbek remembers that '[ich] bin durch meine Stadt gefahren. Habe Wände gesehen. Vereinzelnd. Und das hat mich total gepackt. Hab' mich immer schon für Schrift interessiert und dann gesehen, wie Menschen mit der Spraydose Schrift an die Wand sprühen. War total cool!'[747] By encountering graffiti art in Oldenburg, Sbek's understanding of it therefore 'does not presuppose an original which the process can refer back to, nor does it impose fixed terms of meaning.'[748] Sbek rather experienced graffiti art as an inherent part of urban life in Oldenburg.

Yet, despite the size of the cityspace and the low number of graffiti artists, local writer Asek explains that 'so einen richtigen Oldenburg Style gibt es halt eigentlich kaum so.'[749] With Oldenburg's graffiti art community having established itself later than communities in other German cities, it can be argued that the short time span between its establishment as a local art movement and the rise of graffiti art circulating the Internet has caused Oldenburg's graffiti community to remain largely identity-less in terms of creating a typical local font. Indeed, Asek adds that 'gerade durch das Internet und dadurch, dass die Leute ja auch alle reisen, vermischt sich das einfach total.'[750] In this sense, Oldenburg's contemporary stylistic diversity is comparable to Hamburg's

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[743] Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[744] Cf. Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[745] Ibid.
[746] Ibid.
[747] Sbek, interviewed by author, 7 March 2012.
[748] Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration*, p. 136.
[749] Asek, interviewed by author, 21 March 2012.
[750] Ibid.

multikulti style, with the main difference being that Oldenburg's graffiti art community is mainly comprised of ethnic German writers, similar to its local rap community.

Just as the practice and performance of rap established itself in accordance with Oldenburg's spatiality, graffiti art has been subject to a comparable urban adaptation. Without an inner-urban rail transportation system in Oldenburg, mobile visibility and communication has been pursued on the metal canvases of regional train lines where the same formats of top-to-bottoms and whole cars remain valid criteria with which to interpret artistic skills. However, within this regional locomotive realm, graffiti art's train writing norms have also been re-defined and sophisticated by re-interpreting different train models as status symbols. Asek explains that

> entscheidend ist wie lange der Zug fährt und wie das Bild auf dem Zug ist. Das ist eigentlich sogar noch entscheidender. Aber ein Güterzug wird nicht so hoch angesehen, wie jetzt eine NordWestBahn.[751] Also diese Ränge gibt es natürlich schon.[752]

Moreover, while train pieces in New York City and in Hamburg served to communicate between crews in different neighbourhoods and boroughs within the cityspace, Oldenburg's main railway station is located on the regional network line. With Sbek thus stating that 'ich hab' *gestern* erst einen [Zug in Oldenburg] gesehen. [...] War eine Osnabrücker Crew,'[753] he reveals that graffiti art placed on regional train lines allows for messages and social statuses of local writers to transcend urban boundaries, enabling much wider geographical communication via train.

Yet, in order to communicate within the cityspace of Oldenburg different 'firstspaces' need to be re-appropriated, since '[n]atürlich sind Züge geil, aber nur dann, wenn du auch ein System hast, das dir die Möglichkeit bietet. [...] Graffiti braucht seinen Gegenwert in Form von Sichtbarkeit.'[754] In Oldenburg, this equivalent value is already realised due to its small-scaled cityspace, with local graffiti artist Tosh explaining 'du kannst ja in Oldenburg super schnell *Fame* kriegen. Wenn du einmal los gehst und dir wirklich mal Mühe gibst, dann bist du sofort bekannt. Es fällt sofort auf.'[755] Writer Delles from Hamburg perceives the written presentation of self through graffiti art as a far greater achievement in Oldenburg than in a metropolis, for in

> einer Großstadt wie Hamburg ist es im Endeffekt viel einfacher [illegales Graffiti zu malen] als in Oldenburg, ne? Wenn du in Oldenburg einen Train

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751 The NordWestBahn is a private railway company whose trains connect to Bremen, Wilhelmshaven and Osnabrück when passing through Oldenburg.
752 Asek, interviewed by author, 21 March 2012.
753 Sbek, interviewed by author, 7 March 2012.
754 Shark in Loh and Verlan, 'ist doch alles so schön bunt hier – Zehn Vorurteile zum Thema Graffiti', *25 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland*, pp. 315-19 (p. 317).
755 Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.

> malst, ist es da so, als würde einer zehn Banken überfallen. Malt hier einer einen Train fällt das gar nicht großartig auf. Deswegen. Die Leute in den kleinen Städten riskieren im Endeffekt viel mehr, weil in der Sumpf der Großstadt hier geht das unter. Wenn du in Oldenburg in der Innenstadt einen Tag machst, dann kriegst du gleich sofort 2000 Euro Strafe. Wenn du hier ein Tag machst, fällt das gar keinem auf.[756]

Delles' perspective thus re-negotiates the urban conditions that have originally framed graffiti art's social statements as being exclusively tied to metropolitan cityspaces and lifestyles.

By taking advantage of Oldenburg's spatial privilege and by risking prosecution, graffiti artist Indiz has attained the highest social status of 'King. Auch wenn wir das immer mit einem Lächeln sagen, „King Indiz." Aber er kriegt Respekt. Er kriegt Anerkennung von uns allen für seine Art.'[757] According to Moe, 'kaum einer ist so publik in der Stadt, wie er, was illegale Bilder angeht.'[758] One of Indiz' strategies for gaining public visibility via graffiti art has been to adapt graffiti art's practice of 'bombing' to local noise-barrier walls. As Oldenburg's automobile routes pass directly through its city centre, the roads' noise-barrier walls offer similar symbolic features of spatial centrality and hence visibility as subway or urban railway cars in metropolitan cities. Thus, by re-appropriating these material 'firstspaces' as personal graffiti art canvases Moe explains that Indiz is 'der, wenn du auch an der Autobahn lang fährst, alle paar Meter ein Bild irgendwo von sich hat.'[759] Moreover, Moe acknowledges 'mit was für einer Genauigkeit der seine Sachen macht,'[760] which has provided Indiz with 'einen sehr wiedererkennbaren Stil' (see Figure 11).[761]

Indiz' throw-up reaches over three PVC panels comprising a noise-barrier wall where its *microtypography* is characterised by fat, simple capital letters painted in silver. Their outline consists of a pale blue and black border. The *mesotypography* is defined by a tight composition of the letters that creates the name as a single unit. Any gaps are filled with a black background. With no *macrotypographic* features enhancing the piece at first sight, it can be argued that the angular pointed shapes placed above the two 'I'

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[756] Beatboy Delles, interviewed by author, 21 May 2012. In 2014, an annual statistic released by the German police revealed that Oldenburg registered nearly three times the amount of graffiti-related damages than Hamburg. The statistic does, however, not clarify what type of 'graffiti' is included and whether all damages relate to a hip-hop discourse or merely to vandalism with an areosol spray can. Cf. Stolz, Matthias, 'Deutschlandkarte: Graffiti', *Zeitmagazin,* 26 (2014), 10.

[757] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.

[758] Ibid.

[759] Ibid.

[760] Ibid.

[761] Ibid.

serve as a *macrotypographical* addition, while simultaneously signifying the orthographic dot of the smaller case 'I'.

Figure 11: 'Indiz'

Indiz' typographic style fits Tasek's aforementioned description of the German simple style: straight block letters defined through thick outlines, simple colour fillings as well as a slight swing, all executed with a clean spraying technique.[762] However, the similarities are rather rooted in the same aim to be fast and efficient.

Beyond the efficiency and perfection of his individual style, Indiz' large, public presentations of self become especially revealing when knowing that 'wenn du den irgendwo treffen würdest, der ist unsichtbar.'[763] Thus, from a social perspective, Indiz' presentation of self through graffiti art has become 'seine Kommunikation. Komplett!'[764] Indiz also engages in a discourse with local German authorities, since his pseudonym is at the same time a German juridical term which refers to a piece of circumstantial evidence. Indiz' visual discursive strategy creates a political 'catch me if you can' game with Oldenburg's officials, whereby Indiz' evidence of illegal activity, literally-speaking, 'provides a narrative structure characteristic of modern political rationality: the marginal integration of individuals in a repetitious movement between the antinomies of law and order' (LOC: 222). Indiz demonstrates the way in which graffiti art's repetitive practice of 'bombing' can be culturally translated as a systematic visual disruption of law and order pertaining to a modern German cultural context, which reveals itself through the German linguistic code of 'Indiz' and its spatial location in Oldenburg's 'firstspatial' territory.

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[762] Cf. Tasek, interviewed by author, 20 August 2012.
[763] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[764] Ibid.

While Indiz is thus 'king of Oldenburg' due to his quantitave output, paralleling OZ's achievement and social status in Hamburg, Sbek can be compared to DAIM for being considered 'der beste Sprüher in Oldenburg'[765] in terms of quality. Having been already mentioned in Jordan MC's rap track 'One Love,' the connection between rap and graffiti art as part of an overall hip-hop culture is not only captured in 'shout outs' to Sbek in the form of rap lyrics but also in the employment of graffiti art as a marketing tool during, for example, the annual public 'One Love' rap concert in Oldenburg. A spray-painted stage sign with the writing 'One Love' as well as with local hip-hop caricature 'Cody' holding two speakers creates the stage decoration for the local rap show, highlighting the interconnectedness between local rap and graffiti art practices similar to graffiti art's initial involvement in the hip-hop movement in the Bronx (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: 'One Love'

While this graffiti art piece only appears once a year in Oldenburg's city centre, in 2010, Sbek and his crew BRS legally re-appropriated a wall in the local pedestrian zone to ensure longevity for their mural 'Bohlens Richtige Söhne' (see Figure 13) with which they engage in a dialectical play of contemporary German cultural knowledge and graffiti art's practices in order to represent Oldenburg. The following close reading of the piece's typographic characteristics will explain how this dialectical play is achieved.

The black and purple background of the cemented canvas carries the title, which is *mesotypographically* located above the individual six names comprising BRS. The left half of the canvas reads the names Mast - Topar - Ponshoe written underneath one

[765] Ibid.

another, while Sbek - Tosh - Flome appear on the right half. As the individual style of each name represents the writers' social selves, the crew unity and communal creation of this piece is *microtypographically* expressed through the shared use of yellow, orange and red colours in three-dimensional fonts. The *macrotypography* of the mural further includes seven male faces. One of the faces is placed in the mid-centre of the canvas with the remaining six characters forming a circle around it. The targeted visualisation of individual facial expressions, as well as of different hair colours and fashion accessories further serves to distinguish them.

Figure 13: 'Bohlens Richtige Söhne'

Smaller and more detailed *macrotypographic* elements comprise white stars sprayed on the *microtypographic* borders of the letters and of the characters, while the remaining space at the bottom of the frame is filled with light blue writing dedicating the mural *'Für Vatti'* as well as displaying the graffiti artists' signatures. While the mural's typographic characteristics therefore locate the piece in the realm of graffiti art, the wider meaning beyond the aesthetics, styles and skills employed to create the piece unfolds by making sense of the interconnection of title, names and characters. Yet, in order to extract this meaning, the viewer has to be aquainted with the German language, with German popular culture, and especially with the local hip-hop community of Oldenburg.

Beginning with the title, the identities of 'Bohlen's real sons' refer to the members of the local graffiti crew, which becomes evident in two ways. On the one hand, the pop artist and entertainment figure Dieter Bohlen used to be an Oldenburg local, prior to his commercial success. This shared urban connection is emphasised through the targeted *mesotypography* of the six 'sons' surrounding their *Vatti,* assuming Bohlen's face has been recognised by the viewer. BRS' written dedication follows a traditional graffiti norm as 'writers frequently dedicate their pieces to fellow writers or other friends or relatives or to popular public figures.'[766] On the other hand, the wider meaning reveals itself when knowing that each word of the mural title begins with the letters that comprise the crew's name BRS. However, this identification is not fixed, for the same letter combination has also signified an abbreviation for 'BullRiderS' in the past. Hence, BRS' vacillating identity 'makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process [and] destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code' (LOC: 54). This ambivalence of cultural knowledge relates to a hip-hop discourse, as well.

In communicating a local affiliation with a figure representing German show business, BRS' parodical presentation of self contradicts the norms and values of hip-hop culture. Dieter Bohlen is a living symbol of the pop music industry's supposed artificiality and exploitive commodification of art. Thus, his persona and social identity stands in stark contrast to hip-hop culture's norm of 'keeping it real.'[767] As graffiti artists in particular are known to be motivated by creating art for non-commercial purposes due to the re-appropriation of public, urban 'firstspaces' as canvases, Moe explains that 'wir waren schon immer Leute, die kommerziell eigentlich gar nicht greifbar waren.'[768] This statement especially resonates with Oldenburg's appropriation of graffiti art, in contrast to Hamburg where hip-hop art forms' professionalisation has led it to its commodification, as well. Moe asserts that graffiti art as a non-commercial practice captures the

> Spirit der ganze Geschichte. Also zu sagen: ‚Das kann man nicht kaufen.' Niemand kann sich einen Zug zuhause hinstellen. Das würde sich einfach nicht lohnen. [...] Weil für mich findet das draußen statt. Ich finde, das sollte Menschen zugänglich sein und deshalb habe ich auch Probleme mit [kommerziellem] Rap und überhaupt mit der Verwertbarkeit dieser Popkultur.[769]

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[766] Castleman, *Getting Up*, p. 43; Castleman's observations were conducted in New York City during the early 1980s.
[767] Cf. Menrath, p. 102
[768] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[769] Ibid.

By keeping graffiti art's spirit intact through BRS' non-commercial intentions and *paratypographic* tools and materiality, the tension between pop and hip-hop culture's juxtaposing values is rather created through their fictional spatial narrative: it presents the graffiti artists as being the show businessman's next generation and hence as the carriers of commercialised and hence artificial values of artistic performance. Yet, BRS create this ironic paradox by locating their contradictory social identity in the liminal space of the German linguistic sign. Being Bohlen's 'real' sons, BRS disrupt the sense of 'realness' through their targeted introduction of the adjective *richtige* in their descriptive relationship to Bohlen. The choice of word not only fits the letter R but in so doing implements the term *'richtig'* as an ambivalent linguistic sign. Without insights into hip-hop culture's 'realness' concept, the use of the German term is merely understood as 'true' or 'proper.' If the term were to address the 'realness' discourse of hip-hop directly, the linguistic sign would have had to be written in English, since that is the language with which the concept has established itself in German hip-hop culture. Thus, the German translation of *'richtige'* opens up its signification to other interpretations, beyond hip-hop culture's norms and practices.

Yet, the hybrid outcome of such cultural translations and playful juxtaposing enunciations, with which German contemporary culture is fused with a graffiti art discourse, still becomes symbolic of a German local identity. From a spatial perspective, the mural's central placement promotes visibility that influences the 'thirdspace' experience of Oldenburg, both for 'outsiders' as well as for fellow writers. Moreover, from a social perspective, BRS' contemporary identification as Bohlen's sons also enables Polish-born writer Tosh to be read as a local German, comparable to Das Bo's participation in the rap track 'Nordish by Nature' with which he has managed his identity as being 'Nordic by nature' despite his Eastern European roots. Having re-located from Poland to Oldenburg as a child, Tosh states that he is

> Deutscher, weil ich lebe hier seit etlichen Jahren. Ich kann besser deutsch als polnisch. Und ich bin halt Deutscher so. Aber ich habe meine Wurzeln nicht vergessen. Und ich bin auch ein Künstler. Und welcher Nationalität ich jetzt angehöre, das ist natürlich die Frage so. Ich würd schon sagen: ‚Ich bin ein deutscher Künstler.'[770]

Requiring neither language skills nor his physical body in order to express himself artistically, the graffiti artist reveals his local German cultural affiliation by claiming Oldenburg's territory, namely its 'firstspaces,' through graffiti art. The management of this 'stigma' of foreignness can be contrasted to MicFire and Roulette who share an Eastern European background, yet who rely on the spoken language with which they create real-and-imagined rap narratives located between Russia and Germany.

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[770] Tosh, interviewed by author, 23 March 2012.

While an engagement in graffiti art enables Tosh to integrate his German identity via local 'firstspatial' narratives, a similar affirmation by Moe is visible in his communal graffiti art piece 'Nordlichter' created with BRS member Sbek (see Figure 14). In contrast to 'Bohlens Richtige Söhne,' this piece was painted outside Oldenburg's 'firstspaces,' namely in the Bavarian city of Coburg where the 'writer's social connections – including city and neighborhood (often codes for ethnic identity in the USA) – are acknowledged, visually maintained and conventionally expected.'[771]

Figure 14: 'Nordlichter'

The *microtypography* of 'Nordlichter' consists of Sbek's name written in a slick and entangled 3-D style, produced in shades of white and black and surrounded by a red and blue outline. The only exception to this pattern is provided by the letter E, which is painted in shades of orange and red. Moreover, this letter wraps itself around the *macrotypographical* inclusion of an anchor placed between the E and the K. Besides this anchor, Sbek's piece is further framed by other *macrotypograhical* attributes, which have been created by Moe. These comprise a white seagull placed on the left, and a grey seal on the right side of 'Sbek,' who are facing each other's direction. While both animals are portrayed with blue hats on their heads, the seal also has a pipe resting in its mouth and is wearing a white-dotted red cloth around its neck as well as an inflatable red float around its body. This bears the inscription ABS. It is these detailed and targeted inclusions of *macrotypographical* features that visually maintain the graffiti artists' social connections.

The inclusion of ABS performs the conventionally expected identification with one's locality as these letters represent the graffiti crew of which Sbek and Moe are members. Moreover, Moe's characters as well as Sbek's anchor symbolically allude to a more

[771] Austin, p. 36.

general maritime theme. Especially Moe's addition of traditional nautical elements that define his characters serves to exaggerate the animals' geographic affiliation with the North Sea and hence to a northern German region. This particular 'secondspace' metaphor is also evident in the piece's title, 'Nordlichter,' colloquially labelling people from the northern (German) region. However, while Oldenburg is located in the north of Germany it does not border the North Sea, nor does it have any large seaport. The arbitrary title of the piece and its theme could therefore also refer to Hamburg graffiti artists, with its rappers, music producers and hip-hop dancers having identified with this maritime space, as well. In this case, the maritime theme alludes to a northern German 'secondspace,' which is culturally appropriated (rather than geographically shared) by Oldenburg's artists, as a regional identity set in contrast to its Bavarian 'firstspace' locality.

In terms of graffiti art, the expression of this regional identity places Sbek, the Oldenburg native, in a hip-hop-related context represented through his *microtypographic* style and name. Moe, however, engages in a more abstract identity discourse by disguising his original local background, since his reputation in Oldenburg is 'der coole Moe aus Berlin.'[772] In identifying with northern Germany, Moe, however, admits that '[i]ch bin jetzt ein Landei geworden. Ich gehör jetzt zur Provinz irgendwo dazu.'[773] It is this provincial message, which he communicates through his *macrotypographic* identification as a '*Nordlicht,'* highlighting the way a graffiti artist can indeed 'have authentic attachments to a place and develop a form of cultural identity that is influenced by movement.'[774]

This movement does, however, not only refer to Moe's spatial relocation. It also refers to the social and historical perspective of his stylistic presentation of self. While Moe explains that he has 'einen Namen, den ich auch ab und zu mal schreibe: MOE,'[775] the graffiti artist at the same time emphasises that 'ich liebe einfach die Herausforderung Figuren zu zeichnen.'[776] Without writing his name as a presentation of his social identity, Moe rather presents his self through characters. In the case of 'Nordlichter' the graffiti artist especially identifies with the seagull '*Moe die Möwe*' who figuratively '*scheißt auf Styles*,' namely on Sbek's letter S. This symbolic dismissal of typographic style iterates Moe's approach to graffiti art's norms and practices.

While adhering to graffiti art's *paratypography,* Moe expresses his interest in 'Komik und Cartoonisten. Also Komikzeichner, französisch, belgisch. Ja? Also so ganz klar

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[772] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[773] Ibid.
[774] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', p. 49.
[775] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[776] Ibid.

europäische Schule und politische Cartoons.'[777] In so doing, Moe's adaptation of graffiti art has become 'eher europäisch angehaucht vom Stil.'[778] Since West Berlin's graffiti community initially represented itself through an adherance to a 'wild style' font, this disruption 'hat natürlich auf dem ersten Blick erst mal nicht in dieses amerikanische Graffiti reingepasst'[779] and 'hat natürlich auch in meiner Crew zu Stress geführt, weil die gesagt haben: „Kannst du nicht amerikanischer malen? Kannst du nicht mehr malen, wie die in New York?"'[780] This drastic cultural and hence stylistic re-articulation compares to DAIM's similar rupture of graffiti art's previously established aesthetic boundaries through his interest in other European art forms.

Exemplifying how by 'taking matter out of one place and putting it in another, there is both the disruption and reordering of the conventional codes and structures,'[781] Moe further defies the common understanding that graffiti art is exclusively defined by stylised letters, while at the same time contesting traditional European art movements by spray-painting on urban walls. It is here that Moe's presentation of self fully performs its disruption and re-ordering, since he engaged in this *macrotypographical* approach to graffiti art as a personal act of demonstration. It was an art form

> wo dein Vater dir nicht reinreden kann. Wo er dich nicht ständig kritisieren kann. Also Comic und Graffiti waren die einzigen Kunstdisziplinen, wo ich mich frei bewegen konnte. Ohne, dass er da groß qualitativ mir was zu sagen konnte. [...] Wo ich sogar so ein bisschen in Opposition zu ihm gehen konnte.[782]

Motivated by artistic rebellion against his own father, a former art teacher in West Berlin, Moe's approach to graffiti art has thus ultimately created a new niche 'weil ich mich nicht messbar mache, durch die Schrift, die die meisten malen,'[783] elaborating that 'ich kann dadurch natürlich ohne in Konkurrenz zu treten deren Bilder ergänzen, aufwerten.'[784] This 'third space' of Europeanised cartoon graffiti art becomes visible in the example of 'Nordlichter' where Moe's intervention of stylistic difference fuses with Sbek's traditional appropriation of graffiti art.

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[777] Ibid.
[778] Ibid.
[779] Ibid.
[780] Ibid.
[781] Papastergiadis, Nikos, *Cosmopolitanism and Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012), p. 131.
[782] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[783] Ibid.
[784] Ibid.

5.6 Summary

This comparative analysis of graffiti art has presented insights into the ways in which graffiti art has distanced itself from the 'narrow range of identity-community sensibilities present within New York City during the 1970s.'[785] By partially splitting from or transforming the original spatial, social and historical circumstances that have shaped graffiti art, spray-painters in Hamburg and in Oldenburg nevertheless continue to base it on 'style, space, identity, and reimagining the city.'[786]

In so doing, it remains to be said that not every expression of graffiti art ties in with hip-hop culture, being the only art form that exists clearly within and outside of it. Graffiti art thus proposes the largest deviation from and ambiguity within hip-hop's overall norms and practices – an ambiguity which is furthermore created by graffiti artists themselves. As this chapter primarily captured graffiti artists whose motivation is linked to hip-hop or who have been adopted by the local hip-hop community, their spatialised meanings and messages have been specifically re-adjusted to the spatial conditions of their respective German cityspace. This addresses Papastergiadis' question 'whether authenticity is bound to the "roots" of traditional forms of attachment, intimacy and proximity, or whether the multiple "routes" of modernity are the only pathways to freedom, criticality and innovation.'[787] It seems as though Papastergiadis' latter option is the case, for while graffiti artists in Germany initially appropriated the 'lore, language, and techniques of graffiti writing,'[788] Moe states: 'Es war schon so, dass dieses enge amerikanische Graffiti zwar wichtig war, um was zu starten, um eine Bewegung loszutreten, aber ich habe schon den Eindruck, dass Deutschland zu einer eigenen Sprache gefunden hat.'[789]

Writers in Hamburg as well as in Oldenburg have re-positioned themselves in a liminal space between the aesthetic norms that recognise the art form as hip-hop's visual element, and cultural codes, which relate the art form's meaning to their own social, spatial and historical contexts pertaining to 'locale, resistance, innovation, affirmation, and cultural identity within a complex web of spatialised meanings and practices'.[790] In Hamburg, this meant that the priority of graffiti art's visibility was inscribed on the local urban railway system while in Oldenburg other fixed urban 'firstspaces' had to

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[785] Austin, p. 36.
[786] Pennycook, Alaistair, 'Spatial Narrations: Graffscapes and City Souls', in Jaworski, Adam and Crispin Thurlow, eds., *Semiotic Landscapes – Language, Image, Space* (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 137-50 (p. 141).
[787] Papastergiadis, 'Hybridity and Ambivalence', pp. 47/8.
[788] Castleman, *Getting Up,* p. 69.
[789] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.
[790] Forman, Murray, '"Ain't no Love in the Heart of the City" – Hip-Hop, Space and Place', in Forman and Neal, eds., *That's the Joint!*, 2nd edn, pp. 225-27 (p. 225).

suffice as visible canvases within the city. However, train art still existed on regional train lines, allowing for a sophistication of guidelines concerning mobile communication in terms of geographical outreach and of the symbolic value attached to the train model on which graffiti art was placed.

Close readings of BK and BRS's piece moreover showed that graffiti art remains a communal art practice, whereby the local messages of the pieces become primarily meaningful through their cultural content and placement on Hamburg's urban railway car and on a wall in Oldenburg's city centre. Such successful re-signification of New York City's metropolitan spatial discourse further proves that the size of a cityspace has become irrelevant towards an authentic engagement in graffiti art, with graffiti art in smaller urban environments even being treated as more remarkable achievements rather than in large cityspaces.

An engagement in graffiti art has further allowed Tosh and Moe to affirm themselves as Oldenburg locals through their creation of and participation in communally spray-painted urban narratives with which they represent, albeit at times geographically arbitrarily, their city of Oldenburg. In Hamburg, an arbitrariness concerning the messages of graffiti art was shown with OZ, who employed his individually-created spatialised narrative to demonstrate against his 'stigmata.' In so doing, OZ's artistic expression was contextualised in a historical German cultural and political discourse, in which his visual resistance towards his national environment challenged graffiti art's aesthetic norms. Having been a rather controversial graffiti artist, OZ's output and works have nevertheless shown that graffiti art has become a relevant marker for the city's identity and a powerful form of communication for the artist, similar to Indiz's playful spray-painted traces throughout Oldenburg.

Other case studies in this comparative analysis also presented motivations to engage in graffiti art that were linked to a more general interest in art. By justifying why he does graffiti art, Sbek from Oldenburg, for example, explains:

> es gibt verschiedene Kunstformen. Es gibt Leute, die Realismus malen. Die malen dann halt nur Realismus. Es gibt Leute, die interessieren sich für Kubismus. Es gibt Leute, die interessieren sich dafür und dafür und ich interessiere mich für Schrift und das ist so meine persönliche Kunstform, die ich mache und die mache ich mit Leidenschaft.[791]

By equating graffiti art with established European art movements, Sbek at the same time elevates the social status of hip-hop's painted art form. This approach to graffiti art was also shared by Hamburg writer DAIM, who even combined his knowledge and interest in European art styles with graffiti art practices. This resulted in his own

[791] Sbek, interviewed by author, 7 March 2012.

microtypraphic 3-D style. Similarly, Moe has fused his fascination for European cartoons with the practice of graffiti art by expressing himself solely through macrotypographic aspects, rather than through letters. Thus, DAIM and Moe have created hybrid graffiti art styles where two cultural temporalities and stylistic priorities, the US-American graffiti art of the 1970s and even older European aesthetic expressions, are implemented as a personal artistic statement. Beyond aesthetically-motivated hybridisations of graffiti art, Tasek has even taken a step towards opening the artistic and cultural boundaries of graffiti art in order to engage in more in-depth questions concerning practices of modern urban life beyond the German national realm. This new approach is captured in his choice to name himself an urban artist rather than a graffiti artist.

Therefore, while graffiti art has become 'unsere Kunst', 'unser Stil' and 'unsere Generation,' as claimed by Tasek in the beginning of this chapter, it does not project a homogeneous and holistic contemporary German cultural entity, but reveals itself as a multicultural statement, and therefore contrary to Germany's early appropriation of graffiti art whose label of the German 'simple style' even relied on a self-stereotype. The totality of examples in this comparative analysis has shown that in both cityspaces the development of graffiti art into a relevant language for its artists has resulted in a hybridisation and diversification of styles and presentations of self without proposing a post-hybrid identity. The colourful images represent a heterogeneity, which perhaps deceptively, does not even reflect the multicultural composition of the local graffiti art communities. Oldenburg's predominantly ethnic German writers represent themselves with the same diversity as Hamburg's sprayers. This normalised state of aesthetic and cultural diversity has rather been mobilised through access to the Internet and cheaper international travel beyond local and even national realms.

Yet, the colourful artistic hybridity of graffiti art nevertheless influences the experience of the German city and provides Germany's provincial and metropolitan 'firstspaces' with a local identity. Thus, Tosh concludes that

> ich merk immer, wenn ich außerhalb mit dem Auto unterwegs war und dann fahre ich nach Oldenburg rein und erkenne ich immer an den Graffitis: ‚Eeeyyy! Geil!' Das ist so, als ob du in eine alte Gegend kommst und du siehst die alten Häuser. Das sind Zeichen! Also das sind ja wirkliche Zeichen, dass man in der Heimat ist![792]

[792] Tosh, interviewed by author, 23 March 2012.

5 Conclusion

This thesis has provided insights into the ways in which hip-hop's four main elements have become culturally relevant and meaningful for its practitioners in Hamburg and in Oldenburg. In so doing, this comparative study, on the one hand, adds to the scarce body of literature concerning the totality of hip-hop culture and, on the other hand, fosters an awareness of hip-hop's aesthetic forces beyond the commercial focus on rap and its subgenre of gangsta rap. While graffiti art presented a slight exception in terms of its relationship to hip-hop culture for always having been practised outside of the hip-hop movement, the theoretical framework and methods of analysis applied in this study have shown how hip-hop's art forms are formed and re-formed through processes of cultural hybridisation and that these influence the expressions of identity and belonging by artists in Germany.

Indeed, the consideration of spatiality, historicality and sociality revealed that hip-hop practised in Hamburg and in Oldenburg exists in a hybrid state, with artists mixing hip-hop norms with cultural codes particular to their city, to Germany or even to Europe. In some cases, this cultural hybridisation has also transcended into an expression of post-hybridity. In this state, artists have engaged in cultural mixture to represent their German identity, showing that cultural diversity is not necessarily a separating factor from German society. They rather understand it as being an inherent part of contemporary Germany, such as rapper Harris mentioned in the introductory statement of this thesis. Despite his African-American and German heritage, he feels

> deutsch, und er will sich dieses Gefühl genauso wenig wegnehmen lassen wie seinen Fußball. Nicht von denen, die ihn wegen seiner Hautfarbe in die Schublade ‚nicht von hier' stecken. Und nicht von denen, die seinen Ruf versauen, weil sie kein Deutsch sprechen. Es gibt nämlich die ‚neuen Deutschen', das sind Leute wie er, und die ‚alten Deutschen', die noch nicht richtig kapiert haben, wer die neuen Deutschen sind.[793]

Such observations concerning the 'new Germans' and their claims towards recognition and belonging to German society despite their perceived 'otherness'[794] have also formed part of the case studies in this thesis. These contemporary examples were initially contrasted to the early stages of hip-hop's manifestation in West Germany, when hip-hop practices mimicked those presented in US-American hip-hop films, or in the case of Hamburg, in terms of other European countries' appropriation of hip-hop. Yet eventually hip-hop artists presented the new art forms as self-stereotypical German performances, which emphasised cleanliness, exactness, rigidness and straightness. The interviews conducted for this thesis revealed that DJs in Germany focussed on

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[793] Pham, p. 17.
[794] Cf. Güler Saied, Stehle and Templeton.

honing precise scratching techniques, while b-boys created the 'straight German power' style defined by clean and well-executed movements. Rappers, on the other hand, articulated themselves in clear and proper German while German graffiti artists became known for their straight and precisely sprayed 'simple style.' However, through close readings of contemporary hip-hop material, the thesis has also presented examples that have shown how hip-hop has dissolved into a cultural diversification of its previous German identity.

This diversification was examined in two urban realms, which until now had not been analysed in any full-length ethnographic hip-hop study. By looking at hip-hop practised in Hamburg and in Oldenburg, this research project engaged in Soja's observation that

> studying cityspace presents a potentially endless variety of exemplifications and interpretations. Faced with such complexity, we explore and explain as much as we can, choosing those specific examples and instances which most closely reflect our particular objectives and projects for obtaining useful, practical knowledge, knowledge that we can use not just to understand the world but to change it for the better.[795]

Thus, this thesis has been the first to consider the ways in which hip-hop artists occupy, comprehend and experience their urban space, deeming it relevant towards understanding the expression of their identity as German hip-hop artists and as producers of contemporary German art and culture. In so doing, the choice of the two northern German cities presented hip-hop as an artistic cultural movement that was equally practised by ethnic minorities as well as by the ethnic majority, distancing itself from the common notion that hip-hop is solely an expression of the minority.

Furthermore, the urban selection enabled looking at hip-hop from a metropolitan and professional as well as from a provincial and leisurely perspective. This has shown that hip-hop in a smaller German city approximates the way hip-hop was originally lived in the Bronx, with artists supporting each others' art forms and working together to engage in hip-hop as a non-commercial past time. Hip-hop in the larger metropolitan city of Hamburg was practised in the same way, yet eventually moved towards professionalisation and commodification enabled through the city's commercial structures. This, in turn, has also divided the interconnectedness of hip-hop's different elements and artists, who nowadays nearly exclusively work together to stage professional events or to realise commercial projects. Fieldwork observations at a local rap festival in Hamburg, for instance, revealed that the backstage regions of dancers and rappers were separated. Dancers were not allowed to enter the rappers' domains despite performing on the same stage at the same hip-hop event.

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[795] Soja, *Postmetropolis,* p. 12

By examining these differences through the theoretical framework, which took spatiality, historicality and sociality into consideration, this study has also shown that these three components have become useful perspectives for determining hip-hop's cultural adaptation, aesthetics and practices in the respective German cityspaces. Having looked at hip-hop from a spatial perspective, this thesis contributes to the existing knowledge on the relationship between spatial logics and hip-hop, which has been previously introduced in Forman's research on rap, space and place. Yet, this study provides further insights into the spatial implications of graffiti art, hip-hop music and dance concerning the formation and expression of identity, whereby the theoretical distinction between 'first-,' 'second-,' and 'thirdspaces' has deepened the understanding of these spatial influences.

The spatial analysis of rap has shown that this art form enables the dissemination of messages from multiple spatial perspectives, such as from the street, the living room, or even from Germany or Russia. This is because rappers' notion of spatial authenticity can solely be rooted in 'secondspaces.' These are created through words and hence through imagination, rather than through the physical appropriation of spaces. This lyrical creation of space therefore allows for a wider flexibility in terms of spatial narratives, enabling rappers to express more complex and controversial identity discourses when situated between physical-*and*-imagined spaces. Since rappers only require their voice as the most basic level for their presentations of self, their art form alongside music productions can moreover be produced and disseminated faster and consumed more easily, with the power of words and sound reaching a wide audience in a short period of time.

Performances of hip-hop dance and graffiti art, on the other hand, unfold in 'firstspace' realms and hence as live 'thirdspace' experiences. In other words, their art form is deemed 'unreal' if it is not performed in public urban areas. Indeed, this connection in which material or metaphorical space determines the expressions of identity and presentations of self through art has been, to my awareness, underexplored in hip-hop studies as well as in other research areas concerning art and socio-cultural movements. While videos and photographs of dance and graffiti art also circulate the Internet as mediated versions of the art forms, they still require a previous performance in a particular 'firstspace' and need to be consumed visually. It is therefore the body of the dancer that creates the experience in hip-hop dance while graffiti art presents itself as colourful traces without the presence of the artist's physical self. This also leads to a further differentiation where in the case of rap and music productions the cityspace influences the artists' messages and identities, while dancers and graffiti artists rather influence the experience of the city. Thus, the relationship between space and art is

different according to the spatial appropriations and perspectives in which the art forms engage.

By presenting their art form at live public 'firstspaces,' hip-hop dancers in Hamburg can furthermore physically contribute to the multicultural 'secondspace' notion of Hamburg, which influenced the hip-hop sound of its music producers. However, while the music producers employed the culturally open-minded image of Hamburg as an advance towards their development of a local sound, Hamburg does not seem to offer the same multicultural conditions for its dancers. Hamburg's metropolitan cityspace provides all the 'firstspaces' required for pursuing hip-hop dance, including its own competitions. Therefore, Hamburg can also inhibit cultural exchange, as dancers do not have to travel to other places in order to compete, practise and perform their art form. Hamburg can thus be understood as an arbitrary space when it comes to cultural open-mindedness.

Aside from providing new approaches to studying cultural identity through a consideration of 'spatiality,' this study also contributes to critical theory by proposing a new perspective on, and concept of, cultural hybridity through its consideration of 'historicality.' Since hybridity captures the mixture of two cultural elements, which may produce a new, 'third' space, this thesis has shown that hybridity can also alter something old or, in other words, something 'first.' In this case, this 'first' space has been Germanness or a local German identity. Examples have shown that DJs and music producers aim at mixing cultural sounds in order to represent their city or nation, and even understand the art of mixing cultural sounds as the only way to create a German hip-hop music genre, beyond the use of German lyrics. While the social situation in reality has not been able to achieve this cultural mixture in German hip-hop music, which reveals a discrepancy between the imagined ability of hip-hop compared to its actual realisation, music producers in Hamburg nevertheless attempt to create a unique sound. With the city's culturally open-minded 'secondspace' image of being the 'gate to the world' grounded in its local hanseatic history of seafarers and pirates, Hamburg even seems to suit the idea of cultural and musical mixing as a representation of its locality within the wider German nation. By engaging in this maritime-infused image of Hamburg, local music producers of culturally mixed backgrounds can thus even represent their cultural hybridity through hip-hop music as a normal state of German identity, since it stems from the open-minded and multicultural cityspace of Hamburg.

This approach has also become visible in the local adaptation of hip-hop dance. As social dance traditions remain very scarce in northern Germany, especially in cities, hip-hop dancers were not able to use any pre-established local dance tradition, which could be re-discovered and subsequently re-cycled into a German approach to hip-hop. Rather, dancers in Hamburg have relied on their cultural dance knowledge pertaining

to foreign traditions in order to engage faithfully in hip-hop dance. By incorporating this knowledge and experience into their expression of dance, the hybridised approach and performance has served to become a representation of Hamburg, as well as of their German identity when competing nationally or internationally.

While rappers have also been able to express themselves as German, despite having different cultural and ethnic roots, their specific cultural messages are primarily supported through their choice of language. These linguistic options are also dependent on the 'secondspaces' that rappers seek to represent or on the 'firstspaces' in which they practise. Yet their language use can also become arbitrary signs, allowing for the disguise and distortion of national identities. The proper pronunciation of German enables culturally hybrid artists to present themselves as the national majority of Germany while the use of street slang, bi-lingual German and even Russian contests traditional notions of German culture, even if the rapper who expresses himself in this manner is ethnically German. Thus, language may not suffice as an inclusive statement of Germanness, if the listener does not identify with its register, dialect or multilingual expressions.

Lastly, German graffiti art's expression has become a culturally hybrid art form most notably through the global influence of the Internet. It therefore has no German identity of its own anymore, yet when displayed on urban walls and hence on German geographical terrain it can influence the local experience of a German city. While this thesis has therefore shown that the practice and outcome of cultural hybridity is not only a necessity for creating new art, it has also presented that newness in German hip-hop does not aim at threatening existing national norms, values and traditions. Rather, through culturally-induced alteration, culturally hybrid hip-hop artists affirm an identity pertaining to a German city, region and nation. In other words, while the concept of the 'third space' implies a disruption of the homogeneous national whole, post-hybridity emphasises the national whole by showing that it can also exist as a heterogeneous cultural entity, with multiculturalism tied to the same shared emotional affiliation, geographic locality and language. Indeed, each hip-hop element's immediate identification as a regional, urban or national representation of Germany has been enabled through a particular language use. This has been manifested in German lyrical samples, by dancing to German music, rapping in the German language or having a tag or a title of a piece sprayed in German or filling it with German cultural codes and symbols in German cityspaces.

By considering 'sociality' as a final cultural component, hip-hop can also be seen as a facilitator towards accepting this state of cultural diversity since, according to DJ Kool Herc, hip-hop has 'bridged the culture gap. It brings white kids together with Black [sic] kids, brown kids with yellow kids. [...] It gets past the stereotypes and people hating

each other because of those stereotypes.'[796] Hip-hop therefore has the ability to open up a liminal space of cultural recognition and to deconstruct the common stereotyping captured in Jango's summarising statement: 'Die Deutschen sagen: „Du bist Ausländer." Die Ausländer sagen: „Du bist Deutsch!"[797] By allowing artists to fuse their foreign backgrounds into an art form with which to represent their city or nation, hip-hop seems to provide the tools to overcome a supposed 'stigma' of foreignness and to show how 'the stigmatized individual can come to feel that he should be above passing, that if he accepts himself and respects himself he will feel no need to conceal his failing' (STGM: 101).

Yet, the successful or realistic outcome of hip-hop's supposed ability to overcome the culture gap remains problematic. One of the issues is to convince the audience of the artist's 'passing' through an engagement in hip-hop. While public performances of local hip-hop dancers, for instance, contribute to the multicultural image of Hamburg, these artists might not be understood as actually being from the city as they engage in a globally-adapted art form. The same can hold true for rap lyrics and the articulation of German that can be misinterpreted by the common listener as being messages from the minority. Dance, on the other hand, only relies on body and movement as a presentation of self. Hence, black or brown skin tones and other 'attributes' become the predominant signs of the hip-hop dancer's socio-cultural performance, which can also be interpreted as signs of 'otherness.' Furthermore, without any German dance tradition re-appearing in hip-hop dance, nor any other directly enunciated identifier of Germanness, such as the spoken language, hip-hop dance always seems to remain in a state of hybridity rather than post-hybridity from an 'outside' perspective.

Moreover, while culturally hybrid artists attempt to overcome their 'otherness' by destroying 'the constant principles of the national culture that attempt to hark back to a "true" national past, which is often represented in the reified forms of realism and stereotype' (LOC: 218), the art of hip-hop also remains in a socio-cultural struggle to be identified as a German cultural movement. This affects its ethnic German practitioners, as well. By trying to re-frame hip-hop's supposed foreignness as familiar Germanness, hip-hop artists choose to present their art form as a high-class artistic expression. This strategy has been mostly rooted in paralleling as well as fusing hip-hop with a classical artistic context, which, in so doing, has attempted to elevate hip-hop's social status into becoming '*deutsche Hochkultur.*' An examination of the ways in which hip-hop is practised and perfected in specific 'back' regions and consequently performed in designated 'front' regions has thus revealed how Das DJ Orchester blends classical

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[796] Kool Herc in Chang, p. xi.
[797] Jango, interviewed by author, 8 June 2012.

performance norms into their DJ show in order to make a statement about their status as musicians. Hip-hop dancers have danced on theatre stages and to classical German music in order to improve their reputation as professional performers. Rappers, on the other hand, have compared their art form to canonical German poetry and Germany's linguistic as well as literary tradition. Finally, graffiti artists equate their art form to past European art movements with some sprayers even fusing these European approaches with their spray-painted aesthetic in order to achieve fame and respect through artistic innovation, which are even displayed in art galleries.

While hip-hop practised in Hamburg and in Oldenburg is therefore still establishing itself, insofar as it attempts to be understood and respected as a German art form, it is also used as a mobiliser towards successful integration and intercultural communication. Hip-hop dancers in Hamburg thus aim to teach social and personal values through their art form, while b-boying has also been named 'ein Beispiel für gelungene Integration'[798] by Deutsche Welle host Hajo Schumacher after talking to Berlin b-boy Vartan Bassil's positive experience as a Lebanese-Armenian growing up in Germany. At the end of the interview, the German television host concludes that 'alle [in Deutschland] stehen vor der großen Herausforderung, die sich Integration nennt. Was genau ist das eigentlich? Da gehen die Meinungen ziemlich auseinander. Einigkeit herrscht aber darüber, dass Kunst und Kultur, wir sehen es hier mit dem Breakdance, dabei helfen.'[799] Indeed, this observation is not new to hip-hop studies with Cheesman already having observed that the 'elective affinity between hip hop and ethnic minority youth encouraged educationalists and social workers to develop inner-city projects harnessing hip hop to goals of multiculturalist integration.'[800] This is because hip-hop's art forms and cultural norms and practices allow for the inclusion of different histories and cultural understandings. Most importantly, hip-hop permits the expression of personal artistic freedom. While hip-hop dance has already been associated with this liberty in its respective chapter, it is no coincidence that the creative and improvised practice of rapping, as well as dancing and turntabling, is called '*free*styling.' Similarly, Moe points out that graffiti art in Germany 'ist eben auch *befreit* worden. Durch Street Art und durch Konzepte, die jetzt weit über dieses Streetbombing oder Trainbombing hinausgehen,'[801] touching upon the hybridisation of graffiti art which has transcended its aesthetic as well as cultural boundaries towards a more democratic engagement.

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[798] Schumacher, Hajo, in Bassil, Vartan, 'Talk mit Breakdancer Vartan Bassil | Typisch Deutsch', Interview by Hajo Schumacher, *Deutsche Welle* (Youtube, 1 October 2012) <http://www.youtube.com/watch? v=SMwniRnibZ4> [accessed 12 June 2013].

[799] Ibid.

[800] Cheesman, 'Polyglot Pop Politics', p. 198.

[801] Moe, interviewed by author, 11 March 2012.

However, it does not seem as if the integration of cultural pluralism in hip-hop has been or can be adapted to wider society, when considering the on-going debates and problematics of multiculturalism and parallel societies in Germany. With hip-hop struggling to be accepted as a German cultural movement it remains difficult to disseminate a message of cultural belonging through an art form that is often understood as being the opposite, namely as a movement of resistance and of the minority. Moreover, intercultural communication and co-operation is also lacking in hip-hop itself, such as in German hip-hop music productions with the absence of cultural exchange mentioned by interviewees. In line with these statements, this research project has also identified that different ethnicities remain more represented than others within hip-hop's individual elements. In other words, there is a separation of ethnicities and cultures between hip-hop's art forms.

Hamburg, DJing and music production tend to be practised mainly by ethnic Germans, with some artists being half German. Only a few Turkish DJs have proved to be exceptions to this observation. In hip-hop dance, however, ethnic German male dancers remain very scarce. Rather, dancers of Asian, African and Middle Eastern heritages dominate this element in Hamburg. Rap, on the other hand, does not feature any Asian cultural backgrounds at all, but mainly represents ethnic German, African, as well as Eastern European heritages. MicFire and Roulette from Oldenburg have proven to be exceptional cases. They neglect their ethnic Germanness in order to affirm their Eastern European identity, which is positively influenced by their German cultural environment. Lastly, graffiti art is mainly pursued by ethnic Germans and Eastern Europeans, as well as by artists of Middle Eastern descent.

Thus, ethnic Germans engage in all hip-hop art forms but remarkably least in dance. Turkish ancestries, on the other hand, have hardly appeared in rap compared to the other elements. This is especially interesting when considering that early German hip-hop studies heavily focussed on the Turkish minority's engagement in rap. The reason for this roughly-outlined cultural separation within the different elements remains unclear. Only graffiti writer Davis has proposed that it is due to the supposedly different ethnic conditions of the artists, thus hinting at a problematic of cultural integration and exchange in Hamburg's graffiti art community, despite hip-hop's supposed ability to integrate and assimilate. While this observation opens further areas of investigation, it also highlights the fact that the generalisation of the results and perceptions within this thesis is, of course, subject to limitations.

Since the time frame of the investigation lasted from January until September in 2012, the thesis invites further comparative studies in order to define the longevity of the results. Over time, the debate on German *Leitkultur* may have changed or the aims and artistic expressions of hip-hop may have shifted, since hip-hop 'has never been a static

form; it has always been subject to change and hybridity owing to ongoing influences that are generated through multiple connections and contacts.'[802] This also includes the growing influences of the Internet and other mediatisation processes, which have already altered the practice of graffiti art and of rap with online photo communities and YouTube videos re-arranging the spatial, social and historical dynamics of the artists' presentations of self.

Furthermore, the models of identity processes presented in this thesis may not be transferable to every hip-hop artist in Hamburg and in Oldenburg. Conversely, not every local inhabitant with a foreign cultural background may feel the same way towards Germany as the hip-hop artists who feature in this thesis. It would therefore be interesting to compare the experiences of individuals with the same cultural predispositions in order to identify to what extent the norms and practices of hip-hop culture have shaped the aforementioned identity discourses. While religion and religious affiliations were omitted as a marker of cultural identity in this study, an inclusion of it in further analyses could add another perspective to contemporary dynamics of identity formations in hip-hop culture. Similarly, the issue of gender in hip-hop should be addressed, since nearly all interviewees who participated in this study were male. While this ratio faithfully represents the gender dynamics of the two hip-hop communities, this aspect welcomes further research concerning female artists' engagement in hip-hop's art forms and whether their aims and objectives also re-negotiate the representation of their identity and national affiliation.

Moreover, since this study looked at two cityspaces within Germany, more comparative urban analyses need to be conducted in order to transfer the insights and results onto the wider German nation. These could include other hip-hop strongholds, which are located in southern Germany, such as Munich, or in East Germany, such as Dessau or Leipzig. This would serve to highlight differences or similarities in terms of the historical development of hip-hop and the regional and urban variation and strategies with which artists make hip-hop a meaningful form of German artistic expression. Extending this idea, it would then be compelling to see whether other art movements and cultural lifestyles have had the same force of bridging and blending cultures into representing one national identity, as hip-hop has been able to do within the German cultural landscape.

Finally, the focus of this analysis can be broadened beyond hip-hop, as well. While this thesis has shed light on the different nuances of identities, ranging from hybrid constructions to the emergence of post-hybrid identity formations expressed through

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[802] Forman, *The 'hood Comes First,* p. 199.

hip-hop culture practised in Hamburg and in Oldenburg, these different levels of identity have been detected through the targeted focus on spatiality, historicality and sociality. This study therefore suggests that this three-dimensional theoretical framework can be applicable to other cultural identity studies, which equally aim at detecting the changing dynamics of culture, identity and belonging in Germany, since as b-boy Vartan claims:

> mittlerweile wird Deutschland immer bunter. Das sieht man auch bei der Nationalmannschaft. Und ich finde das einfach wunderschön, weil Deutschland *hat* Farbe. Und warum soll man nicht dazu stehen und das ist auch eine tolle Sache, so offen und bunt zu sein.[803]

Indeed, two years after conducting research for this thesis, an article in *Spiegel International* addressed the question of what it means to be German in 2014 by stating that 'Germany in 2014 is a very different country than it was in 1984, not to mention 1994 or 2004 […] There's a new feeling of what it means to be German.'[804] This new feeling is summarised in the sentence that 'Germany has become one society, but also a diverse one.'[805] Yet, at the same time, the article also states that '[i]mmigration and integration nevertheless remain difficult issues. Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats still don't like thinking of Germany as a country of immigration.'[806] In this sense, this research project sees itself as a contribution to the complex discourse of identity formations in a multicultural German society.

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[803] Bassil, Vartan, 'Talk mit Breakdancer Vartan Bassil | Typisch Deutsch'.

[804] Böll, Sven, Rafael Buschmann, Carsten Holm, Frank Hornig, Dirk Kurbjuweit, Paul Middelhoff, Conny Neumann, Anna-Lena Roth, and Steffen Winter, 'The Bearable Lightness of Being: How Germans are Learning to Like Themselves', *SPIEGEL ONLINE* (Spiegel.de, 17 July 2014) <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/football-championships-help-boost-german-image-at-home-and-abroad-a-981591.html> [accessed 18 July 2014].

[805] Ibid.

[806] Ibid.

6 Appendix

6.1 List of Intervieews (in alphabetical order)

Asek (20/m) *German*	Graffiti artist *Graphic designer*	21 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Azad (20/m) *Kurdish/Turkish-German*	Popping dancer *Dance teacher*	25 May 2012 in Hamburg
Beatboy Delles (35/m) *German*	B-boy/graffiti artist *Dance/Graffiti teacher*	21 May 2012 in Hamburg
Backenfutter (20/m) *German*	Rapper *Unknown occupation*	24 August 2012 in Hamburg
Blacky White (31/m) *Ghanaian-German*	Music producer *Artist manager / event coordinator*	10 July 2012 in Hamburg
Boran (30/m) *Turkish-German*	Freestyle rapper *University student*	5 April 2012 in Oldenburg
Can (24/m) *Turkish-German*	Hip-hop dancer *Dance teacher*	21 May 2012 in Hamburg
CB (20/m) *German*	Rapper *University student*	24 August 2012 in Hamburg
Davis (38/m) *German*	Graffiti artist *Photographer*	20 August 2012 in Hamburg
D-Flame (32/m) *Polish/Jamaican/Cherokee with German citizenship*	Rapper/DJ	26 July 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Ben Kenobi (35/m) *German*	DJ	3 July 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Dope (26/m) *German*	DJ *Official organiser for tour guides in Oldenburg*	20 January 2012 in Oldenburg

Mirko Machine (43/m) *German*	DJ/music producer	10 May 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Mixwell (33/m) *German*	DJ/music producer	19 June 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Placeebo (30/m) *Turkish*	DJ	26 July 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Stylewarz (38/m) *Caucasian-American/German*	DJ/music producer	12 June 2012 in Hamburg
DJ Vito (30/m) *Capeverdean*	DJ/music producer	21 June 2012 in Hamburg
Gizmo (36/m) *Croatian*	B-boy *Hip-hop journalist*	17 July 2012 in Hamburg
Henry the First (26/m) *German*	Rapper/singer *Event coordinator*	25 January 2012 in Oldenburg
J-Smart (24/m) *German*	Rapper/music producer *Photographer/video-grapher*	25 January 2012 in Oldenburg
Jango (28/m) *Cameroonian-German*	B-boy/DJ *Dance teacher*	8 June 2012 in Hamburg
JayHuttz (20/m) *German*	Rapper *University student*	24 August 2012 in Hamburg
Jill (20/f) *German*	Graffiti artist *Intern*	14 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Jordan MC (30/m) *German*	Freestyle rapper *Unemployed*	21 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Juiz (28/m) *German*	Freestyle rapper *Unemployed*	21 February 2012 in Oldenburg
K-Four (25/m) *Shona/Zimbabwean*	Rapper *Unknown occupation*	9 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Luc von Mensing (25/m) *German*	Rapper *University student*	31 March 2012 in Oldenburg

Macentosh (29/m) *German*	Freestyle rapper *University student*	21 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Maxi (22/m) *German*	Rapper *University student*	31 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Metin (32/m) *Turkish*	B-boy *Event coordinator/dance coach*	4 May 2012 in Hamburg
MicFire (28/m) *Russian-German*	Rapper *Unemployed*	14 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Moe (42/m) *German*	Graffiti artist *Educationalist*	11 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Philipp Kabbe (40/m) *German*	Graffiti artist	20 August 2012 in Hamburg
Nan-D (38/m) *German*	Freestyle rapper *Event coordinator*	4 July 2012, e-mail
Nate57 (22/m) *Angolan-German*	Rapper	21 August 2012 in Hamburg
Newman o.t.B. (24/m) *German*	Rapper *Unemployed*	11 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Raphael (24/m) *Afro-American-German*	Beatboxer *University student*	20 January 2012 in Oldenburg
Ronin (26/m) *German*	Rapper *University student*	25 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Roulette (25/m) *German-Russian*	Rapper *Assembly-line worker*	14 February 2012 in Oldenburg
Samy Deluxe (35/m) *Sudanese-German*	Rapper/music producer	29 July 2012 in Hamburg
Sbek (35/m) *German*	Graffiti artist *Tattoo artist*	7 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Sleepwalker (40/m) *German*	Music producer	5 June 2012 in Hamburg
SonnyTee (46/m) *Indonesian-Dutch*	B-boy/graffiti artist *Dance teacher/coach*	29 August 2012 in Hamburg

Stee (32/m) *German*	Freestyle rapper *Music festival coordinator*	26 July 2012 in Hamburg
Stephen Long (21/m) *German*	Rapper *Unknown occupation*	24 August 2012 in Hamburg
Stylez-Tyson (24/m) *German*	Rapper/music producer *Unemployed*	14 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Tasek (39/m) *German*	Graffiti/urban artist *Graffiti teacher*	20 August 2012 in Hamburg
Telly Tellz (22/m) *Guinean-German*	Rapper	22 August 2012 in Hamburg
Tim Beam (36/m) *German*	Artist Manager	8 August 2012 in Hamburg
Torch (38/m) *Haitian-German*	Rapper/DJ	29 August 2012 in Hamburg
Tosh (35/m) *Polish-German*	Graffiti artist	28 March 2012 in Oldenburg
Udu (64/f) *German*	Graffiti activist	13 May 2012 in Hamburg

6.2 Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Aim	Question
Introduction to conversation	Wer bist du?
Introduction to interview topic	Wann und wie bist du mit Hip-Hop involviert geworden?
Gaining an awareness of the interviewee's practical involvement in hip-hop	Wieviele Hip-Hop-Künste beherrschst du?
Gaining an awareness of the personal importance of hip-hop for interviewee	Warum Hip-Hop und nicht eine andere Musik-, Tanz-, Kunstrichtung?
Understanding the communal aspect of hip-hop	Wie sieht es mit Hip-Hop Crews in Deutschland aus?
Gaining an awareness for the priority of hip-hop in the interviewee's life	Wie viel Zeit investierst du im Durchschnitt in der Woche für Hip-Hop?
Understanding the level of importance regarding hip-hop from the United States	Warum ist USA und ihre Hip-Hop-Szene ein Vorbild?
Gaining an insight into the development of hip-hop in order to understand better its current state	Wie hat sich die Hip-Hop-Szene, in der du dich bewegst, über die Jahre verändert?
Aiming at revealing a Germanness in hip-hop that is perhaps not known to the common consumer	Was ist "deutsch" am Hip-Hop der aus Deutschland stammt?
Aiming at discerning differences and similarities between the two cities and their hip-hop communities	Wie würdest du die Hip-Hop-Szene in Hamburg/Oldenburg beschreiben oder charakterisieren?
Gaining an awareness of the interviewee's investment in keeping hip-hop alive in Germany and passing on knowledge	Warum gibst du Unterricht in deinem Hip-Hop Element?
Gaining an awareness of hip-hop's potential future dynamics and current state in Hamburg and Oldenburg	Wie sieht es mit dem Nachwuchs aus?
Revealing complexities and issues within hip-hop that artists may want to tackle	Was sind deine Ziele als Hip-Hop-Künstler?
Giving the interviewee the opportunity to share final additional information	Gibt es etwas, was dir unbedingt noch wichtig ist, mir auf dem Weg zu geben?

6.3 Ethics Form

25/11/2011

Marissa Munderloh

Modern Languages

Ethics Reference No:	**ML8215**
Project Title:	**Urban Identity Constructions in German HipHop Culture**
Researchers Name(s):	**Marissa Munderloh**
Supervisor(s):	**Michael Gratzke**

Thank you for submitting your application which was considered by the School Ethics Committee. The following documents were reviewed:

Ethical Application Form	05.10.2011
Participant Information Sheet	05.10.2011
Consent Form	05.10.2011
Debriefing Form	05.10.2011
External Permissions	n/a
Letters to Parents/Children/Headteacher etc…	n/a
Questionnaires	n/a
Enhanced Disclosure Scotland and Equivalent (*as necessary*)	n/a

The University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) approves this study from an ethical point of view. Please note that where approval is given by a School Ethics Committee that committee is part of UTREC and is delegated to act for UTREC.

Approval is given for completion within the stated time period. Projects, which have not commenced within the time given must be re-submitted to your School Ethics Committee.

You must inform your School Ethics Committee when the research has been completed. If you are unable to complete your research within the validation period, you will be required to write to your School Ethics Committee and to UTREC (where approval was given by UTREC) to request an extension or you will need to re-apply.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECguidelines%20Feb%2008.pdf) are adhered to.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Larg

On behalf of the Convenor of the School Ethics Committee

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